

ART AND SOCIETY



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THE HUMANISM OF SOVIET ART

Soviet art is inseparably linked up with humanist philosophy, with the ethics and aesthetics of humanism. A work on the writings of Stanislavsky, Vakhtangov, Meyerhold, Tairov, Nemirovich-Danchenko or Mikhoels, the symphonies of Shostakovich or Khachaturyan, the canvases of Saryan, Deineka, Plastov, Korin, Petrov-Vodkin, Konchalovsky or Samokhvalov, or the sculptures of Konenkov, Shadr, Mukhina or Jokubonis is inconceivable without the subject of humanism being one of its leading ideas.

The principal gain of the new, socialist art is the discovery of the new man who is changing the world and becoming changed himself in the process, the discovery of the character of this new man, the world of his spiritual aspirations and the poetry of his life.

Thirty years ago, in 1937, A. S. Makarenko, the noted Soviet pedagogue and thinker and author of universally famous books, devoted a paper to the subject interesting us and entitled it "The Strength of Soviet Humanism". He wrote:

"Soviet literature artistically mirrors the thoughts of new mankind.

"The life of the Soviet Union and every deed it performs is the cause of all mankind, a cause permeated through and through with the profoundest faith in its righteousness, a cause of liberation, a cause of humanism.

"And one of the paramount and most admirable features of Soviet literature lies in its unfaltering and unfailing humanist undertones, in the capti-

vating beauty of the loftiest human aspirations dreamt of through the ages by the finest people.

"In 1916, in the darkest hour of the world shambles, Mayakovsky said:

*And he is
free,
the man
I am talking about—
he will come,
without fail,
believe me!*

"And that man came!

"The humanism of our literature, which has unfolded itself before the whole world . . . will one day be recognised as one of the most stupendous phenomena of the revolution."^{*}

In the above excerpt the author correctly emphasises the continuity of our—revolutionary, socialist—humanism from the humanism of all progressive art of the past. Our modern literature owes much to the work of its great predecessors. Our modern art is as indebted to the great Russian painters, actors and musicians of the past, to the Russian classics.

In a lecture on Russian classical literature, delivered in Capri in 1909, Maxim Gorky, who was one of the greatest of the modern humanists, spoke superbly about the nature of past Russian literature: "Let us look through Russian literature, which is the mirror of our life—it is celebrated for its humanism, and its underlying note is its love of mankind. That is indisputable."^{**}

* A. S. Makarenko, *Works*, Vol. 8, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1952, pp. 153-54.

** *The Gorky Archives*, Vol. I, *History of Russian Literature*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1939, p. 266.

"Russian Art", an article written by Gorky in the historic year of 1917, magnificently characterises the giants of 19th-century Russian culture, pinpointing the most salient feature of their art—active, forceful and heartfelt humanism. Listing the artists who in the 19th century were the pride of Russian democratic culture, Gorky wrote: "The colossus Pushkin, our supreme pride and the fullest expression of Russia's spiritual strength, and beside him the magician Glinka and the sparkling Bryullov, Gogol, who had no mercy for himself or others, the nostalgic Lermontov, the sad Turgenev, the wrathful Nekrasov, the great rebel Tolstoi and our aching conscience Dostoyevsky; Kramskoi, Repin, the inimitable Moussorgsky, Leskov... the great lyric Chaikovsky, and Ostrovsky of the spell-binding language..."*

Had we wanted to lengthen this list, we could mention the valiant Radishchev, who wrote his great rebel book in the 18th century, and would have to name Herzen, Chekhov and Gleb Uspensky, the men of our century—Blok, Bryusov, Skryabin and Vrubel—and many other great humanists of pre-revolutionary Russia. Gorky's words in the same article faithfully apply to all of them: "Russian art is primarily sincere. In it there unquenchably burned a romantic love of mankind, and the flame of this love burns in the work of our artists, great and small—the Narodniks in literature, the 'itinerants' in painting and the 'handful' in music."**

We would be, however, exceedingly narrow-minded if we failed to see our predecessors in the

* M. Gorky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1953, p. 184.

** Ibid., p. 185.

great artists of all nations, who lavished their humanist work upon their own day and also future ages, our revolutionary 20th century, in particular. The whole of world art—from the father of tragedy Aeschylus and the father of comedy Aristophanes through Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, Balzac, Ibsen and Thomas Mann—is a heritage that we cherish, a heritage which we accept and which teaches us to see the strength and beauty of ideals, and philosophic and aesthetic wisdom. The baton of humanism comes to us from great antiquity, passing through the ages, from one generation to another, and we take it over, give it new spiritual impulses, and hand it on, renewed, to the artists of the future.

Our humanism has its deepest roots in past traditions, in all that is best in these traditions. But at the same time it is a new, innovatory type of humanism founded on the new philosophy evolved by the proletarian, socialist revolution and formulated by the teachers of the new mankind—Marx, Engels and Lenin. The life and work of these great teachers of revolutionary mankind are a stirring and full-blooded embodiment of the principles and ideals of the new, socialist humanism.

Prior to Marx, Engels and Lenin there were many distinguished humanists but they were unable to offer people a workable programme of emancipation because their utopian dreaming prevented them from evolving a clear, scientific philosophy. They felt compassion for man who lived in an ugly, unjust world, but could not show him a way out of that ugliness. They were opposed to the world of violence, lies, deceit, self-interest and suppression and exploitation of man by man, but they did not know how to change it for the better. Marxism-Leninism gave people

a programme for remaking the world and stretched out its hand to save man and mankind. It scientifically worked out a model of the society of the future and showed how that society should be built. In the course of a real struggle, the struggle of classes, it brought a new type of man into being.

We are proponents of active, realistic, revolutionary humanism. And our cardinal aim is, therefore, to remake society and reshape the spiritual nature of man. The moulding of the new type of man, of the man with a communist way of thinking, began with the emergence of the Party forged by Marx and Engels and then by Lenin and his associates. Today this type of man is to be found throughout our planet and he has attracted into the orbit of his influence the most diverse people, Party activists directly engaged in the struggle for communism, and non-Party Communists, ideological associates of the Marxist-Leninist vanguard of the world. Ideological and emotional principles closely, organically intertwine in the new man, the man with communist ideals. A man of integrity and unswerving convictions, he deeply feels his principles and ideals. Being a real humanist he is inclined towards social "pedagogics" in the loftiest sense of the word. He creates a new world and a new man. In this respect he is like Gorky, about whom Makarenko once very aptly said that he always had the knack of approaching a person "with an optimistic hypothesis even though there might be some risk of making a mistake. . . . It is particularly significant that in Gorky's case this knack is not so simply realised. He sees a person's positive points but is never affected by them, never reduces his demands of this person and never scruples to subject him to the sternest condemna-

tion". In this article that I am quoting—"Maxim Gorky in My Life"—Makarenko urges us to adopt the humanist principles of Gorky's approach to man and to learn from him: "And from Gorky we must learn how to project in man all that is best, strongest and most interesting."*

Isolation from society and sectarianism are alien to the humanism of the new type of people, to the humanism of Marxists. Without becoming dissolved in democratic humanism, socialist humanism seeks to sustain, unite and rally all the forces of real humanism, all the progressive, active humanist elements of society. Lenin was a past master at uniting all the forces of democracy and progress, and our art has recorded this feature of his personality. We find it in Gorky's celebrated sketch *Uladimir Ilyich Lenin*, in Mayakovsky's famous poem of the same name, the films "Lenin in October" and "Lenin in 1918" by A. Kapler and M. Romm, Nikolai Pogodin's trilogy about Lenin, E. Kazakevich's narrative *The Blue Notebook*, L. Kulijanov's film of the same name, produced on the basis of this narrative, and the film "Lenin in Poland" by Y. Gabrilovich and S. Yutkevich.

Lenin's ability to unite and rally the leaders of culture, science and art in the name of progress was shared by Maxim Gorky and A. V. Lunacharsky. The same ability was displayed by Georgi Dimitrov, Antonio Gramsci, Palmiro Togliatti, Johannes Becher, Henri Barbusse and other leaders of the international revolutionary movement and international revolutionary literature. The ability to unite people has never meant a retreat from ideological principles or concessions to decadent anti-humanism. As before,

* A. S. Makarenko, *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 342.

it continues to be expressed in the ability to find a common language with progressive bourgeois democrats, in the ability to channel their development along the road of truth, knowledge and the struggle for truth. This powerful influence of revolutionary, socialist humanism on the minds and hearts of progressive bourgeois-democratic humanists springs from its wealth of human values. As the ideology of the fighting working class it champions the emancipation of all mankind and is the spokesman of national interests and aspirations for freedom, justice and happiness. It uncompromisingly stigmatises all forms of evil, deceit and violence, holding out instead a realistic programme for remaking man, society and the world.

One of Gorky's letters contains an interesting note reaffirming the link between the new moral code and the new aesthetics. "I have long felt," he wrote, "that new socialist ethics exist. From these ethics there will emerge self-evident aesthetics."* This ideal is pregnant with meaning. The new humanist ethics founded on the ideals and principles of socialism and communism have given birth to new aesthetics. Let us return to Makarenko's article "The Strength of Soviet Humanism", which, incidentally, amplifies on Gorky's idea that socialist realism is a synonym of socialist humanism: "The humanism of our literature is not imprisoned in formal wishes and neither is it a literary pose; it lies in the very themes that we touch on, in the tone used by the author and in his socialist awareness.

"Socialist realism may legitimately be called humanist realism because it rests on optimistic

* M. Gorky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1955, p. 280.

persuasions, on the vigour of our life and on the prevision of mankind's emancipation.”*

These are significant words if we interpret them without simplification and remember that in speaking of the themes of our art Makarenko by no means had in mind that they should be narrowed down or restricted; on the contrary, he urged that they should be selected as far as possible with an eye to advisability. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the reference to the vigour of our life did not imply a call to embellish reality, to which the author of *The Road to Life*, *Learning to Live* and *A Book for Parents* was not in the least inclined. In this statement of Makarenko's we should like to underline his perception of socialist humanism not only as a socio-ethical but also as an aesthetic category.

The most important achievement of socialist art is the birth, growth and development of a new type of artist—an artist with communist views, who firmly adheres to the Leninist principle of Party partisanship of art. The humanism of the Soviet artist dovetails with his aesthetic devotion to the spirit of the Party. He is not of an immutable quality; without playing false with his principles, he constantly develops and finds new features in himself. A humanist artist tirelessly seeks new forms in which creatively to embody his humanist ideas and ideals, thereby enlarging and enriching the field for giving expression to these ideas and ideals. Take, for example, Yegor Isayev's poem "The Tribunal of Memory" and Eduardas Miezelaitis' cycle of verse "Man". Written almost at one and the same time, they differ essentially from each other. In the first the idea of man's omnipotence, of the effectiveness of

* A. S. Makarenko, *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 155.

his struggle against war and fascism is given in epic form coloured by the author's lyrical view of the world. In the second we encounter lyrical-philosophical meditations, allegoric abstractions and powerful metaphors through which the author expresses his declarative-lyrical attitude to the present and future and builds up his hymn to Man. It was Hegel who wrote that "... in art the spiritual content cannot be alienated from the mode of expression". The diversity of the artistic forms of expressing humanist ideas is, naturally, rooted in the multiformity of art and wealth of its content.

A conspicuous feature of the socialist humanist writer (as of the new type of artist generally) is that he strives to resolve the problems of ideological education. One of the main problems is to bring up an integral and versatile personality, a man with communist qualities. This is, of course, a long and difficult process, and the key to it cannot be given by a single book, by one work of art. Generally speaking, we cannot allow ourselves to be beguiled by the illusion that independently a work of art can educate or re-educate people. We realise that art exerts its influence as one of many social factors. However, every true humanist artist strives to make every work a vehicle of social education in line with the common objective of Soviet art, which is to mould an integral communist personality. We have only to turn to the commentaries that leading writers and artists—Mikhail Sholokhov, Alexander Fadeyev, Alexei Tolstoi, Dmitri Shostakovich, Sergei Konenkov and many, many others—have written on their own work to appreciate the sincerity of their aim to provide mediums for ideological education.

The task of bringing up an ideologically

integral man, a versatile and harmoniously developed personality can be coped with only by an artist who is himself an integral and spiritually rich personality. Maxim Gorky and Vladimir Mayakovsky, the founders of socialist realism in literature, are the models of integral creative natures. Mayakovsky's words: "I cleanse myself under Lenin's guidance in order to sail farther in revolution" are more than a declaration; they express the real process of the development of this artist's humanist principles. Both Gorky and Mayakovsky were able to perceive and show us Lenin as a man and leader because they themselves possessed the same quality of revolutionaries. The above words of Mayakovsky's come to mind when on the screen we see the brilliant performances of B. Shchukin and M. Shtraukh, who perpetuated the image of Lenin in films. It would be superfluous to say that all four—Mayakovsky, Gorky, Shtraukh and Shchukin—tackled the same big problem from different aesthetic angles, but they had a common point of departure. That is precisely how art, the art of socialist realism and socialist humanism, is enriched.

Another important task of the humanist artist is to educate the reader and the viewer in a spirit of civic responsibility. In tackling this task our art has always found a mighty assistant in progressive classical art, in progressive critical-realistic and romantic literature of the modern world abroad. Soviet art and the art of socialist realism, which is developing in many countries, have a mainstay in works expressing the ideals of social progress which promote the spread of socialist ideas. Fine literature for children has been created in the Soviet Union. The names and works of Kornei Chukovsky, Samuel Marshak, Agnes Barto and Sergei Mikhalkov, to mention a

few children's writers, need no introduction. Their books, like those of the prose-writer Arkady Gaidar and Boris Zhitkov, have been translated into many languages. In the Soviet Union there are many theatres for children and teenagers, and the number of films produced for them is growing steadily. But we would be dogmatists if in bringing up our children, in instilling lofty moral principles into their minds and hearts we failed to draw on the works of Pushkin, Shakespeare, Aksakov, the brothers Grimm, Zhukovsky, Perrault, Jules Verne, Mark Twain and other classics. The spiritual world of the Communist is built up of the vast wealth accumulated by mankind through many centuries of development.

Civic responsibility can be instilled only by people who are aware of their own social responsibility. Our leading artists and writers are active citizens, patriots and internationalists. Mayakovsky's well-known words "helmsman of the people and their servant rolled into one" are a motto, as it were, characterising the attitude of the Soviet artist to his people and to his internationalist duties. Soviet artists have undergone many tests: they fought in the Civil War and the Second World War; and their works dealt with all aspects of the life of the people, helping to build the new society and combat conservatism, inertness, bureaucracy and everything else that stood and stands in the way of progress. Nikolai Tikhonov's *Kirov Is With Us*, Dmitri Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony and the poems of Olga Berggolts, Vera Inber and Alexander Prokofiev were written during the war years in besieged Leningrad and their mighty voices broke through the blockade and were heard in every part of the country.

The artist's responsibility to his people and age is an aesthetic problem. Decadent artists holding anarcho-individualistic views are socially irresponsible and socially "neutral" (but, in fact, dependent, as Lenin put it, on the money-bag, on corruption and prostitution). As distinct from them, the humanist, democratic artists are constantly aware of their responsibility to their people for their work, for their duty as citizens. For this reason they invariably strive to select their themes with an eye to new, rational, creative means of expression. The literary diaries of Dmitri Furmanov are an eloquent example. In these diaries, Furmanov, who was one of the founders of socialist realism, spoke about the ways and means of presenting heroic images and the heroic deeds of the people during the Civil War. When he wrote his books *Chapayev* and *The Revolt* he was immersed in a quest for the best way of approaching themes and images. He wanted his personalities to be realistic and to achieve a powerful educational effect. There are other striking examples of leading Soviet artists indulging in creative self-analysis and telling of their struggle to find the best artistic solution in lyrics, epic tales, the theatre, films and other artistic media and genres. Among them are Vladimir Mayakovsky's article "How to Write Verse", Alexander Tvardovsky's article on how he wrote the poem "Vasily Tyorkin", the collections of articles by stage producers Konstantin Stanislavsky, Yevgeny Vakhtangov, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Alexei Popov, and the books of the film producers Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Alexander Dovzhenko, Mikhail Romm, Sergei Yutkevich and Sergei Gerasimov. These works, all of which are "confessional" to some extent, are permeated with the

spirit of innovation, quest and discovery. Each line gives expression to our humanism and shows the artist's living and unbreakable bond with the people and his profound desire to serve the cause of progress.

The artist and the new reality is an interrelation which reveals the link between the humanist artist and the new, humane reality. The art of socialist humanism is extremely emotional, for in it the author does not conceal his attitude to the phenomena and events he describes. Take Alexander Serafimovich's *The Iron Flood*. It is fired with affection for the new world and the new people and admiration for the iron flood of Revolution. Or take Vladimir Mayakovsky's poem "Fine", in which the epic of Revolution merges with lyrical motifs coming from the author and helping the reader to understand the processes and stages of historical development. Or take Alexander Deineka's well-known painting "Defence of Petrograd" in which he lovingly portrays the valiant defenders of the Revolution who were prepared to lay down their lives. Or take Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin's painting "Death of a Commissar" with its inextinguishable love of the new people of the new world.

There is an aura of romance round the humanism of our art. This humanism rejects the past with its gloomy survivals, energetically promotes the onward movement and strives to glance into the future and illumine our road to that bright future. Very noteworthy in this respect are the words uttered by Maxim Gorky shortly before his death, at the second plenary meeting of the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers in 1935: "We have to know more than two realities—the past and the present, in which we are taking part. We have to know the third reality, the reality of

the future.”* These words are a behest of this great humanist writer. Revolutionary humanism has its eyes on the future, and the humanist artist's knowledge of the laws of historical development gives birth to his historical optimism. During the half-century of the Soviet Union's existence this historical optimism has been put to the test time and again. It passed this test with flying colours during the Second World War, when Soviet artists courageously looked into the future through the blood and horrors of the first stage of the war. This was the period that witnessed the creation of works full of faith in victory such as Vasily Grossman's *The People Immortal*, the publicist articles of Alexei Tolstoi, Mikhail Sholokhov, Ilya Ehrenburg, Vsevolod Vishnevsky, Leonid Leonov and Boris Gorbатов, *Rainbow* by Vanda Vasilewska, the plays *The Russians* by Konstantin Simonov and *Front* by Alexander Korneichuk, Dmitri Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, and the satirical drawings of the artists Kukryniksy and Boris Prorokov. There was not even the slightest hint of a retreat from humanism in our militant literature during the grimmest period of the war. On the contrary, it was and remains a literature full of passionate humanism and internationalism. It has always been such ever since its emergence during the Civil War and up to the most recent times. It has witnessed the appearance of Konstantin Simonov's *Dead and Alive* and *Soldiers Are Not Born* and V. Bogomolov's novels *Ivan* and *Zosya* (on which the talented films “Ivan's Childhood” by A. Tarkovsky and “Zosya” by M. Bogin were based).

Another key aspect of humanism in Soviet art

* M. Gorky, *Works*, Vol. 27, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1953, p. 419.

is the relation between the artist and the new hero. In Soviet art the concept of man is permeated not only with faith in his possibilities but also with the conviction that his is a heroic nature. In the heart of the new man there lives the potential of the heroic, which is fostered by the experience of Revolution and socialist and communist construction, by the innovatory nature of labour in our country and by Soviet man's revolutionary readiness to defend his country. Art educates heroic characters, showing the heroism of reality itself. Most of its educational material is drawn from life, for it knows the value, power and moral charm of examples.

With the development of the art of socialist realism the artistic research into personalities deepens and the artist penetrates ever farther into the spiritual, moral world of his heroes. A hero can only be understood by socialist art in the surroundings that mould and influence him. In this respect Soviet art is emphatically opposed to the trend of decadent Western literature and art to "disassociate" man, a trend that is obviously anti-social and anti-humane. The hero of Soviet art is a thinking, developing person of the new society, which above all prizes the social value of man and his work. In the best works of Soviet art this hero is intellectually rich, and we find him in Pavel Korchagin (*How the Steel Was Tempered* by Nikolai Ostrovsky), the young people in *The Young Guard* by Alexander Fadeyev, and Davydov (*Virgin Soil Upturned* by Mikhail Sholokhov). He is to be seen in Andrei Sokolov (*The Fate of a Man* by Sholokhov), a man of daring and valour who overcame suffering and fear (all this was superbly conveyed by Sergei Bondarchuk in the film of the same name). Writing about Dmitri Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony

back in the 1930s, Alexei Tolstoi and Marietta Shaginyan very correctly stressed that in this work the composer conveyed the struggle of spirit in the contemporary socialist man. In Vsevolod Vishnevsky's *An Optimistic Tragedy* the woman commissar is guided by revolutionary morals, and hers is a victory of the revolutionary intellect over the anarchic element. These are all different ways of showing the intellect of the heroes. But behind them all is a single idea, which is revolutionary, socialist and humanist.

Ours is a fighting, polemical humanism. Sure of its ground, it openly combats modern bourgeois ideology, the decadent ideology of the reactionary world. It must be emphasised, however, that this is more than an aesthetic struggle, for an aesthetic struggle is a derivative of a struggle between philosophies. The philosophical enemy of our art and social thought has many facets, but in the great range of trends and hues of present-day reactionary bourgeois thought we should like to single out existentialist philosophy and aesthetics as one of the chief enemies. This philosophy, which tears man away from society and releases him from social responsibility, has become particularly widespread in the changing and uneasy post-war world, and as far as art is concerned it is one of the most dangerous variants of bourgeois individualism. It "reaches out" for art, intrudes into its realm and frequently causes it great harm. With every nerve and fibre it possesses, our art combats the existentialist concept of man, a concept that is anti-humane and pessimistic.

The polarisation in the ideological spheres of the modern world, a polarisation that is pronounced and steadily increasing, distinctly affects the state of art. Socialist realism is locked in un-

compromising combat with anti-humanist decadent art in all its forms and varieties. Socialist realism, the road for which was first opened in the Soviet Union, holds high the banner of humanism.

These are only some of the aspects of the humanism of Soviet art, which, having accumulated vast and instructive experience during the past half-century, is attracting more and more artists in many countries.

THE ESSENCE OF SOCIALIST REALISM

The creation of a work of art is associated with many creative problems, one of the chief among them being that of method.

The creative process is the aesthetic cognition and reflection of reality, bringing out human characters and social phenomena. It is entirely determined by the artist's approach to understanding life and depends on certain artistic ways and means of reflecting reality. For this reason the struggle for a proper understanding of the essence of socialist realism, a method of artistic creativity applied in Soviet art, is the most acute in modern art.

What is this method?

Every field of knowledge has its own, specific method of cognition. The specific features of an object of cognition determine the character of the method by which people are guided in discovering and explaining the secrets of nature. Being a means of reflecting and knowing life, art produces its own method, the basic principles of which are formed in the process of people's creative activity. To reveal the nature of socialist realism, it is necessary to reveal the nature of its artistic method in general.

The artistic method is a method of reflecting life, a particular means of cognising reality needed by an artist to implement his creative design. Its core consists of definite principles and ways and means with the aid of which the artist produces the maximum aesthetic effect on people.

Like science art has also a great cognitive significance. In depicting life the artist generalises multifarious impressions produced by it, comprehends the properties of phenomena, objects, and human characters and creates particular type-characters that help to reflect the epoch, the times and people.

The question is how should the artist take his bearings in the multitude of living phenomena, bring the reader the wealth of life and an understanding of beauty, truth and goodness.

As Anton Chekhov so aptly put it, half talent is the choice of a proper creative method. The artistic method is based not on the artist's subjective desires but is conditioned by the objective laws operating in nature and society. To meet the objective requirements of the artistic cognition of life in a true fashion, the method must be above all truthful.

The artistic method which is being formed in the process of creative work should be inseparably connected with the process of knowing life, a process which must be understood not "lifelessly", not "abstractly", not devoid of movement, not without contradictions, but in the eternal process of movement, the arising of contradictions and their solution.*

Most Western critics deny the concept of method in general and the method of socialist realism in particular. For instance, the American critic K. MacGregor claims in his article "Art and the Policy of Marxism" that socialist realism is not a method at all, for from the outset it was presented as an official policy, not as a creative technique.**

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 195.

** *Cuadernos americanos*, n. 5, 1957.

Polemics on this question are carried on in the press of socialist countries as well.

We do not deny that the process of artistic creation is thoroughly individual and unique. But this unique style does not at all negate the general principles of the artistic reflection of life common to artists with a particular world outlook, and the same social aims and tasks.

At the same time the fact that there is a common line as regards creative method does not at all exclude the artist's individual talent. Although Leonardo da Vinci's creative work and style is unlike that of Raphael, the latter's unlike that of Michelangelo, Lope de Vega's unlike that of Pierre Corneille, Lermontov's unlike that of Pushkin, Ivan Franko's unlike that of Taras Shevchenko, Marcel Proust's unlike that of Zeromski, Theodore Dreiser's unlike that of Jack London, they are all united by a common approach: absolute truth and a maximum reflection of human life in their respective periods.

Suffice it to compare the works of Salvatore Dali and Renato Guttuso, Rotco and Rockwell Kent, Herman Harris and Hershwinn to understand that they are different not only in their creative individual approach, but also in the general principles of the portrayal of life. And this is natural, for, as Lenin pointed out, "the individual exists only in the connection that leads to the universal. The universal exists only in the individual and through the individual. . . . Every universal only approximately embraces all the individual objects. Every individual enters incompletely into the universal, etc., etc."*

The best artistic works reflect the complete wealth of life and reveal the complex dialectics

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 361.

of the development of reality. A genuine artist selects chiefly those moments in life in which dialectical contradictions, their interconnections and regularities manifest themselves with the utmost completeness and accuracy.

"An exact representation of the universe, of its evolution, of the development of mankind, and of the reflection of this evolution in the minds of men, can therefore only be obtained by the methods of dialectics with its constant regard to the innumerable actions and reactions of life and death, of progressive and retrogressive changes."*

How do these regularities manifest themselves in art?

The method of artistic work cannot be reduced to the use of the material of life; it includes all the aspects of the creative process: knowledge of life, choice of topics, selection of materials and artistic means of portrayal. In other words, the artistic method is a method of the artist's approach to knowledge, to the reflection of reality in works of art.

That the creative principles are correct and the artist's talent is properly directed is determined by verifying whether his works correspond to the real facts of life, to their ideological, artistic and socio-political content, and whether they have significance for progressive social development. Since realism in art is a method of revealing the truth of life, of its leading trends, it is impossible to attain artistic truth, using a false method. Since art expresses the interests of definite classes and parties, questions of realism are a central part of social struggle and actually involve the struggle for artistic truth.

The realist method of artistic creation is not an

* F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 36-37.

invention; it is conditioned by the entire development of human cognition, which involves a comprehensive interpretation of life and the unveiling of its secrets. As Maxim Gorky observed, realist creative work is that degree of concentration at which mental activity obtains from a wealth of knowledge and imagination the most salient and characteristic facts and details of a picture, and gives them body as exact, clear notions comprehensible to all.

As a method of artistic creativity realism is different in each historical epoch and appears in forms dictated by the level of artistic thinking of peoples. The art of the past brings us pleasure precisely because it is known for its true humanism, truth and beauty.

Like life art undergoes constant change and development. What today is a summit, tomorrow will become history, for the present advances its own laws and standards.

Socialist realism is one of the stages in the assertion and development of the realistic method of creative work.

Changes in social life in the latter part of the 19th century and the emergence of the proletariat on the historical scene could not but bring about changes in realist art, which came more and more to portray the life of working people. This was not yet socialist realism, but signified the appearance in art of new material, new spheres of life.

Neither Ivan Franko nor Emile Zola rose to the level of socialist realism. They depicted the life of the working class in true colours, but they failed to appreciate its place in social development.

Gorky, the founder of socialist realism, wrote about the working people not only as an existing

force, but also as a force beginning to realise its historic mission in social development. This was aptly described by Anatoly Lunacharsky, the eminent Soviet ideologist, in the following words: "In the creative work of Maxim Gorky the proletariat first gained awareness of itself artistically, just as it did philosophically and politically in the work of Marx, Engels and Lenin."^{*}

Thus, socialist realism is an historically necessary, objective process of development of realistic art in the era of the proletariat's struggle and victory.

Socialist realism made its appearance in that historical period when the revolutionary activity of the working class became the decisive factor in social life.

In literary and other works of socialist realism the working man became the hero for the first time in the history of art. The creative labour and revolutionary struggle of the masses have pride of place in socialist art. The principles of socialist art, which are qualitatively different from those of critical realism, emerged in the process of the establishment of new, socialist relations and the development of new human characters.

An important feature of socialist realism is that its best works reflect the objective laws of life.

The political orientation of socialist art, its party spirit, is fully unveiled, since from its very inception this art has associated itself with the people's life and fate and has cogently proved how beneficial and important is the connection between the proletariat and communist ideas. It is for this very reason that socialist realism gives a fundamentally truthful reflection of reality in

^{*} A. Lunacharsky, *Russian Literature. Selected Articles*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1947, p. 393.

its revolutionary dynamism. This implies that by depicting real life in a true way the artist must stimulate people to strive for lofty ideals and beauty and to educate them as active fighters for truth and freedom.

As Alexander Fadeyev put it, "The truth does not merely mean a superficial resemblance to life. We must take the most fundamental, deepest trends in the development of reality, see what hinders them, and look far into the future. Only in this case shall we see the genuine truth and this is how our socialist realism differs from the old realism. It must last."^{*}

In a letter addressed to Paul Ernst, the German critic and playwright, and dated June 5, 1890, Engels pointed out that the materialist method turns into its opposite if it is not taken as one's guiding principle in historical investigation but as a ready pattern according to which one shapes the facts of history to suit oneself. The same thing also happens with the method of socialist realism when its basic principles are turned into a dogma, with attempts being made to adjust definite phenomena of life to fit it.

Socialist realism is not a scheme, according to which art is to be created, but an artistic method, which most thoroughly obeys the basic laws of the artistic reflection of reality.

While defining the characteristic features of socialist realism, Gorky wrote: "Socialist realism proclaims that life is action and creativity, whose aim is the unfettered development of man's most valuable individual abilities for his victory over the forces of Nature, for his health and longevity, for the great happiness of living on earth, which

^{*} A. Fadeyev, "For Thirty Years", *Collected Articles*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1957, p. 140.

he, in conformity with the constant growth of his requirements, wishes to cultivate as the magnificent habitation of a mankind united in one family.”*

This explains why the principles of partisanship and devotion to the interests of the people are closely associated with such qualities of socialist realism as enthusiastic assertion of the new and revolutionary passion in the portrayal of life. For it is the most important task of socialist art not only to explain reality in general, and social life in particular, but also to participate actively in the reconstruction of this life and support the new and progressive.

At all stages of the development of socialist society socialist art has been striving to depict the life of the working people building socialism in a truthful way and with great artistic force.

The Civil War, the rehabilitation period, the first Five-Year Plans, the Second World War and the rapid post-war development of the Soviet economy and culture were embodied in a big way in dozens of works of literature and art. Such works as *Chapayev* by Furmanov, *The Rout* by Fadeyev, the poems of Mayakovsky and Yesenin, films of Dovzhenko, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, music by Glière and Prokofiev, and paintings by artists of all the fraternal Soviet Republics have determined that artistic trend which today represents the mighty torrent of socialist realism in world culture. The future will see many more brilliant works of literature and art, but the beginnings of the new were laid through the efforts of those first artists who realised the enormous strength of the working people and devoted their talent to them.

* Maxim Gorky, *On Literature*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1961, p. 264.

Many things influence the creative work of artists but the factors most responsible for serious errors on their part are isolation from life, wrong concepts of the essence of life's phenomena, of their interrelation and regular patterns of development. Flaws in creative work may also be due to mistaken political and philosophical views. Take, for example, Gorky's *Confession*, Ehrenburg's *Thaw*, Yevtushenko's *Autobiography* and Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*.

The complexity of the factors influencing the creative work of artists is conditioned by the complexity of life itself. We can safely say that great art is created by painstaking labour and talent on the basis of constant study and knowledge of life.

By analysing actual works of socialist realism we see that the best of them reflected reality and portrayed people in a new way, comprehensively revealing the deep-going changes in their life. Typical among them are *Cement* by Gladkov, *The Road to Life* by Makarenko, *How the Steel Was Tempered* by Ostrovsky, *Standard-Bearers* by Gonchar and *The Zhurbins* by Kochetov and many other wonderful works in all genres of all the arts.

Not infrequently the artist has to use such artistic means as appear in the imagination of people gripped by some deep emotion. Let us recall how Mikhail Sholokhov depicts Grigory Melekhov's sorrow after burying his beloved Aksinya. Early in the morning on a sunny day Grigory is bending over the grave of Aksinya. When he raises his head he sees above himself a black sky and the dazzling black disc of the sun.

Much interesting in terms of symbolic portrayal may also be found in the films of Dovzhenko, who used symbols to give a more profound picture of

the ideological make-up of his characters. Let us recall, for example, scenes in his film "Arsenal" where a horse talks to a man, where Dovzhenko's portrait comes to life and where Timosh, a worker, is being executed by a firing squad of Haidamaks, who fired three volleys but could not kill him. In this famous scene towards the end of the film Timosh stands firmly on his feet but his enemies are dispersing. It is not easy to visualise other artistic means of conveying the idea that the working class cannot be killed.

A variety of styles presupposes an inexhaustible variety of artistic individuals, with unique talents, and a wealth of artistic potentialities inherent in different kinds of art that aspire to depict life at large and penetrate deeply into the consciousness of men and stir their hearts.

The richer the thoughts and feelings expressed by works of art, the greater its significance in social life. Thus the creative method of socialist realism is closely associated with the concrete historical approach to reality.

The grand epic *And Quiet Flows the Don* carries the reader away, the poetry of Mayakovsky and Tvardovsky calls people to join the struggle for the best in life, the lyrical verses of Yesenin, Sosyura and the romantic novels of Nikolai Ostrovsky, Fadeyev and Gonchar fascinate the reader, and the prose works by Makarenko, Kochetov and Nikolayeva cultivate a conscientious attitude to labour. What excites the reader in the works of these and many other authors? Above all the fact that the intelligence and artistic talent of these writers have penetrated deep into the hearts of the people and discovered the features already present which represent important qualities of the man of the future.

Socialist art offers a special new solution to the question of the unity between realism and romanticism. Many artists of the past were romanticists but their romantic ideals were indefinite and illusory, and this led them to give a limited portrayal of life, showing only the inner world of man and the torments of his soul, withholding a criticism of social aspects of life. As Lenin wrote, the romanticist of this type "has no interest whatever in studying the actual process and in explaining it; all he wants is a *moral condemnation of this process*."^{*}

In socialist art we see something quite different. Maxim Gorky called upon writers not to fear including the "Third Reality" in their work. "The present day," Gorky wrote in his letter to another Soviet writer Gladkov, "requires that the author or artist does not shut his eyes to negative phenomena; at the same time, he should emphasise and thereby 'romanticise' positive phenomena." It is the task of the art of socialist realism not only to reflect the new but to facilitate its triumph in every way possible.

Romanticism and realism are closely intertwined in socialist realism, their source being the life of the people, and the inner meaning of developing reality.

Socialist romanticism is not an illusion, it stirs people only when it is filled with real life. Its essence is not the unusual, but the conventional and simple. As Fadeyev wrote, "among the multifarious forms of socialist realism, the romantic form is not only legitimate but also as necessary as air is to man. I mean not only revolutionary romanticism, which is one of the essential aspects of socialist realism, but the romantic form of

^{*} V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 165.

expressing the truth of life.”* The revolutionary nature of the romanticism of socialist realism lies in the way it expresses the hard struggle of the working people for freedom and a better future, and a hatred of everything that cripples and distorts man in society.

In his open letter to the Soviet critic Levin, Makarenko wrote: “I do not accept your reproach to the effect that there are too many beautiful children in my novel. I tend to see all children as such—that is my right. Why not reproach Lev Tolstoi for bringing out so many beautiful characters in *War and Peace*? He was fond of his class, I am fond of my society. Many people today seem to be beautiful. Try and prove that I am wrong.”** A similar idea was voiced by Fadeyev, addressing readers who had assembled to discuss his novel *The Young Guard*. He said that if most of the readers held that the Young Guardsmen were beautiful, the reason for this was his love for them.

The future is always born in struggle, in breaking down men’s characters and outdated views of life. The art of socialist realism was the first art to show the romanticism of life and the struggle of the new man, and enthusiastic labour for the benefit of the whole of society. The labour of working people and their life, which are the main subject-matter of socialist art, constitute one of its essential distinguishing features.

The best works of socialist realism deal with the many difficulties and complexities encountered in the struggle for the new in life.

* A. Fadeyev, *Over 30 Years*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1957, p. 802.

** A. Makarenko, *On Literature*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1956, pp. 217-18.

Naturally, there are mediocre and even bad works of Soviet art, but they do not in any way testify to weaknesses of the creative method of socialist realism or its artificiality. Can one blame the instrument if the musician plays out of tune?

Engels once wrote that life should be approached as such, and if somebody's brain reacts to it incorrectly so much the worse for the brain, not for life itself.

Socialist realism as a method of artistic creation has long since proved its strength in practice. The best proof of the strength and immortality of socialist realism are the outstanding works that live on and continue to stir millions upon millions of people.

SOCIALIST REALISM AND SOCIAL REALITY

The 20th century has witnessed the development of a new method in art, the method of socialist realism. It forms the basis of art in the socialist countries and is increasingly spreading in capitalist countries. It was not pure chance that at the beginning of the 20th century the method of socialist realism was engendered by the advent of a new phase in the development of human society, the epoch of social revolution.

Nor was it accidental that Russia was the place where new methods in art were most actively explored and developed. Early in the 20th century an acute revolutionary situation arose there and it stirred up and exacerbated the struggle in all spheres of spiritual life, including naturally aesthetics and art. As the class consciousness of the proletariat grew it dictated the portrayal of reality from revolutionary positions. The method of critical realism which reached its zenith at the end of the 19th century could not fully satisfy the new requirements which arose when society reached the threshold of revolutionary changes. Critical realism reflected and implacably flayed the bourgeois social system, based on the exploitation of man by man, which warps the human personality and impedes normal social progress. Artists who employed the method of critical realism did not visualise real, historically natural and inevitable ways for further social change. Critical realism, restricted by historical and class limitations, could not become the predominant literary trend of the new, socialist society that was coming to take the place of capitalism.

The new incipient social order needed a new artistic method in order to create an art that would meet the needs of socialist society and embody its aesthetic ideals. This was the method of socialist realism. Brought into being by socialist society, it grew and developed together with the new social order, improving and winning ever wider recognition.

Socialist realism assimilated and further developed the earlier achievements of the arts: humanism, vividly expressed in the art of the Renaissance, the truthfulness and cognitive value of art, the radiant and lofty ideals characteristic of the progressive early romantics, intolerance of society's vices and well-grounded irrefutable criticism of everything obsolete and backward, typical of critical realism, and the broad symbolic generalisations of folk art. Socialist realism has introduced new features into art: from its very inception and throughout its development it has not only truthfully reflected and reproduced reality, irreconcilably criticised everything obsolete and backward hindering social progress, but has also portrayed, championed and actively supported everything revolutionary and advanced in the new, dynamic socialist society.

The method of socialist realism has created a qualitatively new art; moreover, it has also helped to broaden, deepen and change the understanding of the aesthetic categories (the typical, heroic, tragic and comic, etc.) which found new embodiment in artistic works of socialist realism.

At the beginning of the 20th century not all Russian artists understood and accepted the new world outlook and the new method closely associated with it, socialist realism. A considerable section of Russian progressive artists continued to adhere to critical realism. Artists far removed

from the progressive ideas of their age but who were not proponents of bourgeois ideology (such as Kandinsky, Malevich, Shagall and others) sought new ways in art which, far from being linked with the exacerbated social reality, directly led away from it. These were reduced to formal experiments devoid of a definite, socially orientated content. They linked up with similar quests in capitalist countries—France, Germany and Holland. In Russia artists who concentrated on form did not enjoy the wide support of the bourgeoisie which was passive towards art in the years prior to the First World War and the October Revolution. After the October Revolution these artists, who in their formalistic creations shunned the burning problems of life, naturally could not find a responsive audience among the millions of the working people who eagerly reached out for art. These artists left their homeland and settled in Western countries, swelling the ranks of modernists of different trends.

The method of socialist realism was crystallised, enriched and improved in the course of decades, but during all these years it preserved its main features which radically set it apart from all earlier and contemporary artistic methods.

The essence and aim of the art of socialist realism is the truthful, historically concrete portrayal of reality in its revolutionary development. Maxim Gorky, the father of socialist realism, defined it as the "realism of people who are changing, remaking the world", as "realistic imaginative thinking based on socialist experience".* This definition expresses the main aspects of socialist realism: its fidelity to life and

* M. Gorky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Russ. ed., Moscow, p. 44.

active, transformatory nature. These basic aspects determine its basic aesthetic principles—new vision of the world, new understanding of aesthetic categories and the innovatory nature of the works of socialist realism.

The method of socialist realism is closely linked and ideologically united with developing socialist society. As a result, life-affirming, constructive phenomena have become the main concern of Soviet art and, correspondingly, of aesthetics. Socialist realism, which reflects phenomena and embodies the ideals of a progressive, dynamic society, is infused with profound, socially-justified optimism, with faith in the powers and intellect of man, in the radiant future of mankind. Man is the focal point of our art which is imbued with the ideas of socialist humanism.

While continuing and developing the humanist traditions of the Renaissance, socialist realism has introduced its own new, broader and deeper understanding and portrayal of genuine humanism. In the Renaissance humanism in works of art manifested itself above all in the theme of struggle of the individual for self-assertion and the defence of his right to human dignity. Socialist humanism tackles immeasurably broader tasks. In socialist society, emancipated from the exploitation of man by man, the individual is not oppressed and his human dignity is not degraded. Socialist humanism is called upon to champion the opportunities for the all-round development of all the capabilities of each man, for the harmonious development of the personality.

Artists of the Renaissance in their striving to express most fully and visually their love and admiration for, and pride in, man, generously invested their heroes with hypertrophied positive traits. Their heroes, as it were, towered above the

average man and served as a beacon, as a hardly accessible goal in the development of the individual. Socialist humanism, recognising and proclaiming the possibility for the all-round development of each person, does not elevate its heroes above other people, but convincingly and truthfully reveals the genuinely humane traits of each person normally brought up and living in free socialist society.

The heroes of Renaissance art, vested with lofty humanism and acting as champions of justice and the right to human dignity, as a rule, stood in opposition to society around them, were in an irreconcilable conflict with the forces dominating that society. Such a counterposing of the heroes to society was true to life and historically determined: in feudal society and incipient bourgeois society, which in their essence were torn by class antagonisms and exploitation, any display of lofty humanism invariably led to a conflict with society. The tragic outcome of these collisions was true to life and historically inevitable: the individual hero, even possessing titanic strength was naturally unable to emerge the victor in his noble but unequal struggle against the forces dominating society (recall Shakespeare's Hamlet or Othello).

The humane traits of the characters in works of socialist realism are also revealed most forcefully in conflicts. But the positive heroes of socialist art do not stand in opposition to society, they act in the interests of this society and with its support. The main character in Sholokhov's widely known short story *The Fate of a Man* (screened by director S. Bondarchuk) is a striking example of genuine humanism which rises to the summits of heroism. The lofty traits of the hero, unseen in ordinary life, are revealed to the full

in the gruelling conflict—the fight against fascism in defence of his country and the liberation of the peoples enslaved by the nazis. The tragedy and the irreparable losses suffered by the hero, however, do not make him despondent and pessimistic. The aims of the struggle, awareness of its need and faith in the ultimate triumph of justice and progress impart to the tragic events optimism and a life-affirming quality intrinsic in the works of socialist realism. The life-affirming quality is preserved even in works where the main hero perishes (for example, in the film “Ballad of a Soldier”), inasmuch as this sacrifice is made not in vain, but for the freedom and happiness of other people, out of lofty humanism.

The relationship of the personal and the social in the life of the Soviet citizen holds an essential place in the art of socialist realism. In this respect, too, art follows life in the socialist countries where social and personal interests, as a rule, do not diverge.

Proceeding from the Marxist understanding of the personality as a totality of social relations, Soviet artists never lose sight of the need to bring out the closest bond between the social and the personal in the life of man, characteristic of any society and especially of socialist society which is devoid of antagonistic contradictions.

In different periods of socialist society's development the interrelation of the social and the personal in the life of its members differs and this is truthfully reflected in art. In the period of the October Revolution and in the Civil War the active participants in these events were by force of circumstances deprived of many aspects of personal life. Hence it is natural that works of art related to this period, above all reflect the heroic revolutionary enthusiasm which gripped

the masses and touched little on problems of the personal life of the characters.

With the stabilisation of life in the young Soviet Republic, artists laid greater stress on personal questions. But the interest in the social aspect of man's life did not slacken in the least. New social interests entered the life of the people in a wide stream: economic recovery, industrialisation, general striving for knowledge, cultural advancement of the people, equality between man and woman. The change of the social system radically altered the personal destinies of people, the range of their interests, their aims and aspirations. All these intricate social developments were reflected in the art of the second half of the 1920s and in the 1930s.

The conflicts in artistic works of that period were diverse, but they had one common feature—the personal life of the characters was most intimately bound up with the life of society and determined by it. If a hero runs up against difficulties and his personal hopes, so to say, collapse, it is in social life, in work, in friendly contact with his fellow-workers that he “regains himself” and musters the strength to overcome his personal tragedy.

Arbuzov's play *Tanya* is one of the most typical works of this kind. It won merited success among Soviet audiences in the 1930s. A young woman parts with her husband as a result of a personal drama. Abandoned and broken in spirit, she remains with a child on her hands. Alone? No. Concern and unselfish assistance of the people around her enable Tanya to take a worthy place in society—she becomes a respected and loved doctor.

A period of almost thirty years separates this play of young Arbuzov from one of his latest

works, *Irkutsk Story*, widely acclaimed by Soviet and foreign audiences. Here the situation is different and the causes for the personal tragedy of the heroine are different. But she does not remain alone: fellow-workers come to her aid and she does not feel useless, unwanted. Her work and a wide range of social interests help her to find a new place in life.

The link between the social and the personal is unbreakable both in life and in the art of Soviet society. The persistent interest of Soviet artists in the interaction of subjective and objective factors, which stems from the very nature of social reality, is wrongly interpreted by some bourgeois art scholars and critics as a deliberate refusal to consider purely personal problems in the life of the Soviet citizen. In contrast to a bourgeois ideologists, "whose body", according to the witty remark of Marcel Proust, "reckons with the external world in the reality of which his reason does not believe",* every Soviet artist consciously and firmly relies in his creative work on true phenomena of social reality, rightly seeing in it the foundation for moulding the human personality.

The art of socialist realism highlights in artistic images the complex interaction of the personal traits of the characters and phenomena of social life. This approach affords Soviet artists greater opportunities to reveal and portray the evolution of the human personality than those available to artists of the Freudian trend, who confine themselves to the narrow bounds of the "inner" emotions of an individual severed from social life. That Soviet artists, closely linking their

* Marcel Proust, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Leningrad, 1934, p. 466.

creative endeavours with social reality, stand on solid ground and correct positions is understood by foreign art scholars who have lived for a time in the Soviet Union and have studied at close range not only its art but also the country's social conditions and the interests of Soviet people. For instance, Norris Houghton, a well-known American stage director, after staying six months in the Soviet Union, wrote in his book:

"What the mourners for the lost freedom of expression in Soviet Russia fail to realise is that life as the Soviet artist sees it, is the realistic life of the Communist state. . . . Art as an escape is impossible in a state where people have nothing from which to escape. People who glory in the triumph of socialism have no desire to escape into an art which pays no attention to it. Art has been escapist only when society has lost its self-confidence."*

The art of socialist realism, inextricably linked up with the problems of social reality, sensitively responds to society's needs. It reflects life's most essential phenomena and, moreover, closely watches over the shoots of the new and promotes their growth. It helps to translate into reality the communist aesthetic ideal and, thereby, the social ideal.

* N. Houghton, *Moscow Rehearsals*, New York, 1936, p. 263.

SOVIET SOCIETY AND THE AESTHETIC IDEAL

Every civilised society evolves a particular system of social ideals. Ideals point the way to the future. They may be real or false, progressive or reactionary, utopian or scientific. Their character depends, in the final analysis, on the position of different social groups in the system of social relationships.

These ideals reflect the fundamental aims and purposes of different classes and social groups at a given stage of historical development. Any ideal is a selective reflection of the most essential and significant aspects of the social practice of a given class. At the same time the ideal acts as the main motive, the highest aim and a regulator of social activity. Progressive ideals (both empiric and scientific) reflect the main trends and laws of historical development.

The various aspects of social life find their expression in political, moral, aesthetic and religious ideals. All these merge organically as a single social ideal.

Our overall social ideal is communist society in all its aspects and in its entirety.

The core of this overall social ideal is the socio-political ideal of communism, which reveals the tendencies and regular patterns in economic and political relations in the period of communist construction and demonstrates the basic purposes of this construction.

But the socio-political ideal does not exhaust the entire content of the social ideal of Soviet society. Another important element is the moral

ideal. Closely connected with the political ideal, it shows the tendencies and patterns of the development of moral relationships and sets higher standards of moral behaviour for the individual.

The socio-political and moral ideals reveal the trends of deep-lying social relationships (economic, political and moral) which can be known only in the course of abstract deliberation. Therefore, the political and moral ideals exist in the form of scientific theory and can be formulated in general concepts.

Our social ideal is broader than the sum of these ideals, which do not give a full picture of the life of society.

Social relations and ties do not exist apart from their actual bearers. The new society cannot be imagined without real live people whose individuality is a tangible expression of new social relationships. It is here that the third major component of the social ideal, the communist aesthetic ideal, comes into play. It supplies a visual, concrete image of a man of the new society, an image that is accessible to the senses for all its extreme generalisation.

The communist aesthetic ideal is by no means a mere expression or illustration of our social ideal. On a par with the political and moral ideals, it is an organic part of the communist ideal as a whole. Without this important component the social ideal would not be complete. Consequently, aesthetic upbringing is essential for achieving one of the major tasks involved in building the new society, the task of moulding the new man.

Social relations as such cannot be a direct object of aesthetic perception. They can be aesthetically comprehended and appreciated only through their bearer, the live man who is connected in all sorts

of various ways with nature and other people. The shaping of the personality goes on under the influence of the economic, political and moral relations that dominate in a given society. These factors make for an organic interconnection of socio-political, moral and aesthetic ideals.

Yet any personality is incomparably richer than the economic, political and moral ties which play the decisive role in its formation.

Despite its close dialectical connection with the political and moral ideals, the aesthetic ideal has many specific features all its own. These are determined by the specific object and specific method of aesthetic cognition.

The main features of the aesthetic ideal as regards the manner of reflecting reality are the following:

1. The aesthetic ideal (in distinction to the socio-political and moral ideals) is concrete and visual. It can exist only in a tangible image in which thousands of direct aesthetic impressions are synthesised and smelted, as it were, by creative imagination.

2. Despite its concrete and tangible character any progressive aesthetic ideal is the result of profound penetration into the aesthetic essence of phenomena and reflects the fundamental tendencies and patterns of social development, taken in their aesthetic aspect.

3. The aesthetic ideal (precisely because of its concrete and tangible character) does not exist outside of an emotional aesthetic experience. The aesthetic ideal is the supreme emotionally appreciative standard of aesthetic perception and the chief regulator of man's aesthetic activity.

Such are the specific features of the aesthetic ideal as regards the manner of reflecting reality.

But the aesthetic ideal (as well as aesthetic

perception as a whole) also has its specific object. It reflects a particular sphere of historical practice, a specific aspect of social relations.

A study of the successive aesthetic ideals of the progressive classes throughout history warrants the conclusion that the aesthetic ideal always involves *human freedom* or, to be more precise, a *historically determined degree of physical freedom of labour and socio-political activity, freedom of moral behaviour and spiritual life as a whole*.

Slave democracy, centuries ago, cultivated the ideal of a harmoniously developed individual, which found expression in the creations by Phidias, Polycletus, Sophocles, Euripides, Praxiteles and Aristophanes. A necessary condition for this harmonious development was a certain freedom of the activity enjoyed by the slave-owner: political democracy, a certain degree of economic independence, etc. But this freedom achieved at the expense of inhuman exploitation of slave labour was limited and incomplete. The low level of development of the productive forces made man a toy in the hands of necessity enforced by nature and society and represented in his mind as the will of the gods, a mystical, insuperable fate.

Dominant in the aesthetic ideals of the peasantry during feudalism were the concepts of physical freedom and freedom of labour. Labour is the basis of peasant life. That is why physical strength and health, skill and practical know-how, an inventive mind and clever hands were conditions of free labour, of creation by the laws of beauty.

At the same time the peasant was deeply aware of the enforced character of corvée labour and serfdom, freedom from which underlay his concept

of "the good life" and his socio-aesthetic ideals.

The supreme aesthetic ideal, powerfully expressed in folk-songs and legends, was the dream of social freedom, of the free peasant commune; and all the best, heroic and most beautiful in man was symbolised in figures of fighters for the people's emancipation (for example Russian folk-songs about Stepan Razin, English ballads about Robin Hood).

In the conditions of feudalism these dreams were, as a rule, utopian, and a popular hero often acquired legendary and fantastic features.

The aesthetic ideal of the young progressive bourgeoisie was the free harmoniously developed individual which found expression in Renaissance art. This was a step forward in developing the idea of free human creativity. Yet again, it was a matter of relative freedom attained by the few at the expense of the majority, of a freedom limited by failure to understand the laws of social development. The urge to attain personal, individual freedom, freedom of enterprise, freedom from feudal fetters and restrictions, freedom from the spiritual tyranny of the church, the urge which arose from the very essence of the incipient capitalist relations of production clashed with social necessity which was again interpreted as an alien outside force. Therefore, the titanic ideal of the free man extolled in the creations of Michelangelo ("David" and "Moses") and other Renaissance artists was an utopian ideal which could find no realisation in the conditions of an antagonistic society.

The aesthetic ideal of the working class, which today has become the ideal of the entire people, has inherited all the best features of the successive progressive ideals of the past. At the same time it differs essentially from all of them in that it is

the first aesthetic ideal in history which can be implemented and is already being implemented. In this case the urge to maximum freedom in human activity is based on an understanding of social laws and serves as a stimulus to a revolutionary transformation of social life according to scientifically apprehended trends and laws of historical progress.

This supreme degree of freedom attained by the entire society and each of its members promotes the formation of a beautiful, versatile and harmoniously developed personality.

Intellectuality, moral purity and physical perfection are both the basic prerequisites and the results of free creative activity in all spheres of social life.

This implies, in the first place, free labour of free people which expresses the very essence of communist social relations.

Eduardas Miezelaitis, a modern Lithuanian poet, extolled "hands that have known the enormity of labour". For him they are the symbol of free labour and embody the beauty of the working man:

*Have you seen a tree?
Just as a tree lifts its heavy boughs,
I lift my fists.
Here are two hands—
the free hands of a worker.
In the name of these hands
I accept your challenge!
Above all they prize
their freedom to plough and tend wheat,
to sow and reap
and hold a slice of brown bread,
grown freely
by a free people.*

Free creative labour is the prime condition for the formation of a harmoniously developed personality, the man of the new society. Therefore the theme of labour, the theme of man's character being moulded by creative work is the leit-motif of socialist art.

Intellectuality is represented as the vital prerequisite for free creative work, since this work is not a matter of the individual's arbitrary choice but is based on a profound understanding of natural and social laws. A person who lacks erudition, a person with a narrow range of interests cannot be really free in modern conditions.

Moral purity ensues from a deep understanding of the trends and regular patterns in the development of moral relationships between people. A harmoniously developed individual does not blindly obey the regulations of the moral code, but adheres to them voluntarily and consistently, since they express the basic principles of his attitude to people, society and labour. The unconstrained nature of moral behaviour, the moral purity of man is an area of contact between the ethic and aesthetic ideals of our society.

Physical perfection is another consequence of new social conditions, of free creative labour and the care taken by society of the health and leisure of each of its members.

So far we have spoken of the main features of the harmoniously developed man of communist society only theoretically. The theoretical definition is not yet an aesthetic ideal for the latter exists primarily in the concrete, tangible form of the aesthetic image.

Naturally, the aesthetic ideal is also expressed in theoretical works of philosophers and art critics. But however much we respect the science of aesthetics, we would not assert that theoretical

works are the sphere where the aesthetic ideal finds its main expression.

It is not the abstract features of the new man, but man as an individual personality, in all his complexity and completeness that embodies the aesthetic ideal of our society. Therefore, this ideal receives its most adequate, convincing and emotionally effective expression in works of art, in the best works of art of the given age.

Hence the tremendous and ever-growing importance of art in the life of Soviet society. The new social system relies on the new man with an advanced scientific world outlook. The most important element of this outlook is the communist social ideal which includes, as an indivisible part, the new ideal of beauty, a concrete and visual image of the free and harmoniously developed man of the new society. Works of art express this aesthetic ideal and also serve to instil it in the minds of all members of society.

Every individual forms his aesthetic ideals on the basis of aesthetic information received from two sources.

One stream of information comes straight from life, in the form of concrete aesthetic impressions. The other comes from works of art where the results of the artist's aesthetic cognition of the world have been embodied in artistic images. This second stream of artistic information merges with direct impressions of life, setting them off and bringing them into relief. More often than not it is this stream that plays the decisive role in shaping stable aesthetic ideals and tastes.

This dominant role of art explained by the fact that in art the results of aesthetic cognition and aesthetic activity are not only concentrated and sharpened to the utmost, but are also given a

material shape, being expressed in artistic images which have an enormous emotional impact.

Hence art's social function of inculcating in people advanced aesthetic ideals, which are to find their practical implementation in the work of transforming nature, society and man himself, in creative endeavour by the laws of beauty.

Consequently, society cannot remain indifferent to ideals, inspiring the artist and finding direct or indirect expression in his work.

An analysis of the nature of aesthetic ideals ought to be the chief (though by no means the only) yardstick for measuring the social role of this or that work of art, artist, artistic method or trend.

Socialist art is inspired with the communist ideal. Man transforming the earth for the happiness of all people, the fighter and the creator of the world's beauty—this is the new content which distinguishes the new ideal of beauty from all preceding ones. Its other distinctive features are humanism and recognition of the truth that freedom and happiness of the individual are only attainable in a free society which develops according to the objective laws that have been scientifically apprehended.

The ideal of *reactionary, anti-humanist bourgeois art* is a rabid individualist who interprets freedom as the rule of force and tramples on all who stand between him and success. He is a modern variant of Nietzsche's blond beast, a James Bond type superman. Sometimes this ideal is proclaimed openly (fascist art, comics, gangster and spy films, pornographic and certain detective stories). Sometimes it can be deduced indirectly in the works of an artist who has deprived his work of all humanist content and all connection with reality, who has twisted form out of shape to suit him-

self. Whatever the case, the main features of this trend are a distorted subjectivist understanding of freedom (particularly the freedom of creative activity) and widening dehumanisation (this tendency in art was pointed out by Ortega y Gasset more than forty years ago).

The chief source of progressive aesthetic ideals is socialist art in all its variety of creative methods and forms, styles and individual manners (we are speaking, naturally, about gifted artists who produce works of high artistic value).

The anti-humanist line in art is unquestionably inimical to mankind's progressive development. Its task (even though its representatives are not always aware of it) is to slow down the aesthetic enlightenment of the masses, to instil in them individualism, the psychology of brute force, misanthropy and race hatred. It is the bounden duty of every honest man on earth to fight the pernicious influence of this so-called "art".

Progressive aesthetic and other ideals never stand still, but continuously develop along with objective reality itself. Works of art are like the most sensitive barometer registering the changes in the content of the aesthetic ideal. Moreover, works of art are themselves an instrument in forming these ideals and giving them artistic expression. The quickest possible assimilation of advanced aesthetic ideals of modern times by the entire people stimulates and guides the transforming activity of the people and, consequently, our society's uninterrupted advance along the path of social progress.

OBJECT AND SUBJECT, OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE
IN ART

Marx produced a truly scientific concept of object and subject, the objective and subjective, which was radically different from that found in any previous philosophy. While prior to Marx the object had been identified with nature as something immutable, Marx showed that nature not only changes in accordance with the laws of dialectics but also has a history of its own, that the object grows and extends, as it were, as man masters the laws of nature, intrudes into its sphere and transforms it. That is to say, the object in this sense depends on man or, to be more exact, presents man with that aspect or part of itself with which man establishes practical or theoretical relationships. Historically, the object is also a product of man's activities to a certain extent. The surrounding world does not remain immutable but is subject to constant change under the impact of material production.

The subject, too, acquired a radically different meaning from that found in all previous philosophy. While for idealist philosophers past and present, the subject is an abstraction of a function of man's vital activity—intellectual activity—and is, therefore, rather one-sided, in Marxist philosophy it emerges in all its facets, in its entirety, as something complete. Whereas in the past materialist philosophers understood the subject at best as a generic being, but more usually as a biological individual, in Marxism it is man as a social being, or rather, since human society is not a universal

but a historically definite notion, as a socio-historical being. Another important point about the Marxist concept of the subject is that it is viewed as practically active. Materialists before Marx neither comprehended the practical activities of the subject nor took account of them, while idealists have always regarded them as activities of "pure consciousness", the activities of the "spirit", "reason", "idea".

What is the significance of these categories in art, and what part do they play? First of all, art as a form of social consciousness reflects the real world, which exists independently of human consciousness. Both the object and methods of reflection are determined by history: man knows precisely as much about the world as he is permitted by the current standards of production, culture, etc. However, unlike other spheres of human knowledge and activity, art enables man to "outrun" time: the artist may extend the object infinitely. In reflecting reality—a historically definite object or some of its aspects—the artist goes still further: as he creates, he does not merely reproduce the object but projects it into the future, thus producing an idea of the object as it is to be. In this sense it may be said that time has no power over art, for art can reproduce the past, present and future. In any case, art reflects reality as the point of departure for the creation of an imaginary object. Whether he reproduces the past, present or future, the artist will in any case proceed from present reality. Moreover, both reproduction of the past and projection into the future are determined by the present, the concrete historical object being the starting-point of the process of reflection, though its role is not confined to that alone. Any work of art involves the past, present and future, no matter to what point of

time it actually belongs. This "timelessness" follows from the specific character of art as the reflection of reality in artistic images, as a specific relationship of subject and object. A concrete historical object is so not because it is isolated from the past and future but just because it is closely related to both.

However, the concrete historical object existing in actual time and space and its artistic reflection are two different things. Whether a real object (a statue or a building) or an image (a portrait or a picture of a building), a work of art has its own "unreal" reference to space and time, its own "unreal" existence reflecting a real object. Besides their possible usefulness as real objects, a statue and a building differ from all other real objects in that they are works of art. Besides ordinary dimensions, they possess other standards by which artistic values are measured: besides their ordinary existence as things, they have a "second life" in the realm of art. To use the example Aristotle gave, that even before a sculptor puts his chisel to the block of marble he already has the finished statue in his mind, we can speak of a statue's ideational existence preceding its real existence.

The subject not only reproduces the object but creates it. Thus an artist creates things which have had no previous existence in nature (a building, a statue, a symphony, etc.) as well as transforming things according to the laws of beauty. Man humanises nature and objectifies himself in the process. Here we must stress the social character of this contact between man and nature. As Marx showed the human essence of nature exists only for social man, since only society can make nature something which links people. Outside society, nature becomes meaning-

less to man, just as man becomes, in this case, merely a part of nature. Only in society "has what is to him his *natural* existence become his *human* existence, and nature become man for him. Thus *society* is the consummated oneness in substance of man and nature—the true resurrection of nature—the naturalism of man and the humanism of nature both brought to fulfilment".*

This is especially evident in art. Whatever work of art we turn to, its human aspect is clearly manifest. True, the human message of art is expressed in different ways. While it is obvious in a painted or sculptural portrait, it is not immediately apparent in a building or landscape or decorative design, but hovers in the background, so to speak. Sometimes we see the human nature of art in the simple fact that any work of art is of man's creation; sometimes in that the object directly represents man; or again it may be expressed indirectly through colours, lines and the depiction of nature, as in landscapes, decorative designs, etc. Man is the main subject of every work of art. Man humanises nature through society and thanks to society. Art, as a form of social consciousness and also a social form or kind of human activity, not only reproduces nature but also transforms it in creating new, artistic values, the production of artistic values being understood in the broadest possible sense, as both the creation of new works and the reproduction of old ones.

We can draw a line between an artist who reproduces reality in the wide sense, i.e., the subject who concerns himself directly with reality and reflects it in his productions, and the subject who reproduces an existing work. On the one

* K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, 1967, p. 97.

hand, we have the creation of a new work of art and so—provided it is genuine—an original interpretation of reality. On the other hand, we have the interpretation of some already existing work of art. It may seem that the efforts of the reproducing subject are less significant than those of the creative subject. That would be true, were not art a form of social consciousness and had it not a social nature. By virtue of the social nature of art, production and reproduction become interrelated. The value of both is determined by the measure of creative self-expression that has gone into either production or reproduction. Svyatoslav Richter's reproduction—rather than just "performance"—of music appears a no less creditable achievement than original composition. The same refers to the reproduction of poetry by the late Vasily Kachalov of the Moscow Art Theatre.

It is safe to say that the emergence of a work of art is due not only to the author's efforts but also to the contribution of its reproducers and percipients. For in the final analysis the intrinsic value of a work of art depends on its impact on the senses and minds of those perceiving it. An object artistically expressed is objective with regard to the subject who perceives it. Even the finest work of art will carry no "objective" external message unless the subject is sufficiently equipped to receive it. Clearly, such works as Surikov's "The Morning of the Streltsi Execution", Beethoven's Ninth Symphony or Repin's "Religious Procession in Kursk Province" will have a very different meaning for people of different background, cultural standards and experience. Thus, the object and subject are closely interrelated and indeed inseparable.

The existence of the aesthetic object, therefore, depends on its perception by the equally aesthetic

subject. Not in the sense of Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* nor Berkeley's *esse percipi* but in the sense that they are dialectically related. The fundamental proposition of Lenin's theory of reflection—that consciousness reflects external reality existing independently of man's mind—remains true: once they are produced, works of art become independent of our consciousness. But to become so they must be materialised, they must be perceived, apprehended and assimilated. In a word, they must be subjectified.

The subjective is generally taken to mean that which distinguishes a person from all others. On closer scrutiny, it is easy to see that this proposition is invalid, since a person may differ from others by colour of eyes, shape of ears, voice, etc., which may indeed play a certain role sometimes and even a significant one. In fact, however, subjectivity is not only that which makes a person different from others (and it may be anything at all), but depends primarily on the degree to which the objective is concentrated in the subject. Thus, an artist may have an individual manner of painting, colouring, etc. There is no mistaking El Greco for Van Gogh or Repin for Vrubel. And still, an artist's intrinsicality lies not so much in his peculiar colours or strokes as in something more general and fundamental, in his own vision of the world. Everything else, his entire technique, is subordinated to expressing this vision of the world, which may be called his world outlook. The subjectivity of an artist, sculptor, architect or musician, that is of an artist in the general sense of the word, lies in his world outlook. The subjective in art is the reflection of objective reality in individual consciousness, embodied in a work of art.

Generally speaking, in treating of the subjective

and objective in art we should take note of the following points. First, the subjective as a world outlook is revealed above all in the creative effort of the subject producing a work of art. Second, it is manifested in a completed work; that which a work of art expresses and reflects bears the imprint of its author (again, not in external features but in essential content). Third, it also figures in the way a work of art impresses the percipients, thereby becoming objective.

In regarding the subjective as a world outlook we find no essential difference between the works of one art or another. An imposing group of buildings or a short poem are equally products of the artist's creative endeavour and imagination. In this sense, all works of art are the same: St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow, Rublyov's paintings, the novels of Lev Tolstoi, the sculptures of Shadr and Golubkina, the music of Prokofiev and Shostakovich. All works of art reflect reality in one or other of its aspects. It might seem, for instance, that an architectural sculpture (St. Basil's, St. Peter's in Rome, etc.) expresses only the objective while a musical composition expresses mainly the subjective. All one can say is that architecture is more closely related to the productive forces of society than any other art. Thus archaeologists are able to estimate the development of the material and spiritual culture and of the productive forces of long vanished communities by the remains of a building, just as zoologists reconstruct the anatomy of an animal from a single bone or fragment. In fact, however, architecture is as capable of expressing the subjective as music, with the difference that in a building the subjective is "materialised", objectified. That is why architecture is described as "music in stone".

The same applies to sculpture. Nothing, it

would seem, could be farther apart than stone and bronze on the one hand, and human thought on the other. Yet Rodin succeeded in conveying the deepest human thought and feeling in his bronze "Le Penseur". Just as the subjective cannot be reduced to the ideal, so the objective cannot be reduced to the material. Objective reflection concerns: 1) external reality independent of the mind (the material); 2) relationships which also exist independently and determine one's consciousness (production relations); 3) the subject's method of reflecting and reproducing reality as a whole.

All works of art reflect reality and actual relationships, although in varying degree. Each of the arts reflects and reproduces reality in its own fashion, as regards the object, means and material.

In this sense, architecture appears to be the most material and objective of the arts, since its object is quite closely linked to the mode of production and productive forces of society, which determine its material and relevant means of expression. The objective is expressed, as it were, by such means and in such forms as are also objective. Viewed from this angle, works of music are more subjective, for music derives its objective expression and significance from the subjective approach. This can be exemplified by comparing Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony. Though both concern human destiny, the treatment of similar points is vastly different. And not so much because of the means of expression as due to the fact that the objective contents are presented subjectively. As for the means of expression, they vary so greatly that at times the same emotion is expressed by quite opposite means. Shostakovich, for example, expresses fear in the Eleventh Symphony through

a crescendo of concrete sounds of shooting, people running, etc., while in the Tenth Symphony he expresses the same emotion by a tender, delicate, sweetly consoling melody. The external form of a musical composition is not decisive to the expression of the content. Thus, revolutionary feeling comes out with equal force both in Chopin's mazurkas and Beethoven's symphonies.

Different arts have distinct ways of expressing and reflecting reality. This can be seen from the correlation of subject and object, the subjective and objective. In works of architecture the subject may appear to be lacking: a cathedral seems to exist quite on its own, as a piece of objective reality. We find something similar in epic poetry, in which reality is presented in all its richness and variety as the object. The poet, as the subject, occupies a place in the background, as if he were not there at all. It is not only that an epic is produced by the entire people and the poet merely puts it into shape, but that being a form of reflection of an early stage of human progress when social relationships were just beginning to develop, epics express this rudimentary condition through objectively unfolding images of reality, through the object's self-expression and self-amplification. The subject and subjective are pushed into the background. This applies to all epics, from *Mahabharata*, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to the *Man in the Panther's Skin*. Both in architecture and epic poetry it is as if the subject dissolves in the objective element. However, this does not mean that certain structures or epics are devoid of the subjective. They express it in the same measure as music or lyric poetry, but do so in the form of the objective.

Conversely, the subject—the poet who reflects reality through his own self—occupies a central

position in lyric poetry. In a lyric, the objective is a kind of sequel to the subjective. Everything the poet takes up only serves to express his intrinsic subjectivity, his feelings and moods, and his purely personal subjective evaluation of reality and its developments. It is precisely for this reason that lyric poems cannot present a comprehensive world, self-contained in its richness, as is the case with an epos or a building even, for it is the world of the subject with all his feelings and emotions and all his relations with reality. True, lyric poems also vary, ranging from the most intimately personal to the profoundly philosophical. The tendency now is for lyric poetry to extend its scope to the most cardinal human problems. Take, for example, the lyric poems of Miezelaitis, which can perfectly well be called philosophical poetry. It should be noted that a separate lyric is not to be regarded simply as the work of the subject, for a poem is always the child of contemporary consciousness and culture, however much its form and contents depend on the poet. Above all, lyric poems identify the poet's attitude to reality, his own feelings, his very self, but this is always done via some external object.

N. Kiyashchenko

THE HEROIC IN REALITY AND IN THE ART
OF SOCIALIST REALISM

Marxist-Leninist aesthetics and the creative method of socialist realism raise and resolve aesthetic problems in accordance with the ever-changing concrete historical conditions of social and cultural life, developments in social science, and the increasing possibilities of art.

In tracing the logic of historical development and the dialectics of art's development as a means of reflection, perception and change of the developing society, one cannot help but reach the conclusion that the subject of art itself changes, becomes enriched and develops. Art and social life, with its history, are not separated from one another but intertwine and interlace as they develop, stimulating and supplementing each other.

However, contemporary neo-Thomists, neo-Kantians, phenomenologists and intuitionists teach us that the aesthetic categories are ossified and immutable. They completely isolate the subject of art from social life. Ortega y Gasset, for example, maintains that the more art is isolated from the life of contemporary society and the more it concentrates on the inner incomprehensible workings and sufferings of man's soul, the greater is its achievement. Idealist aesthetes believe that art begins where life ends; the artist creates an imaginary world that is divorced from wants, needs, aspirations, desires and the activities of a real man. Hence isolationists believe that man's ability to create that imaginary world is

invariable, and that the same applies to the subject of art and all the aesthetic categories.

Contemporary bourgeois aesthetes ignore the historical approach to art. Hugo Münsterberg, for example, wrote that "a thing ... must be taken for what it is in the given experiment", because it "does not represent its past or its future".* They think that there are "eternal values" which constitute true art.

The practice of art inevitably introduces new ideas into aesthetics and puts the old categories on new foundations. Diderot considerably enlarged the framework of traditional aesthetic categories by including social environment, in addition to man and nature, in the subject of art. He gave a new and broader interpretation to the comic and the tragic. Lessing was strongly opposed to Winckelmann's concept of the beautiful, and argued for increasing the possibilities of art, whose function was to reflect the various aspects of reality. Chernyshevsky too was particularly concerned with defining art's content and giving a more correct and broader interpretation of the basic aesthetic categories. He gave a new materialist definition of the beautiful, and specially analysed and defined the concept of the exalted.

All these changes, additions and specifications were dictated by life itself and by the analysis of art which reflected contemporary life with its new aspects, and new heroes in a new social environment.

In the 20th century, tremendous changes took place in social life, and there were social storms that greatly affected the whole life of

* *Book on Modern Aesthetics*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 411-12.

society. These revolutionary social changes greatly influenced the development of art. The old definitions in aesthetics must now be carefully analysed, for, without that, without new definitions and a new interpretation of the aesthetic categories, it would be impossible to understand the essence of such works of socialist art, as "The Battleship *Potjomkin*", "Mother", "Chapayev", "An Optimistic Tragedy", "We're from Kronstadt", "The Young Guard", "The Forty-First", "Dead and Alive".

The old categories of the beautiful, the tragic, the exalted and the comic cannot explain the many inspired works, where an upsurge of romanticism interlaces and organically fuses with realism. To understand such works, one must proceed not only from the aesthetic principles and laws of art, but also from living reality, from the problems that confront society and find their reflection in art, if art really is a reflecting (and not a blindly copying) mirror of time.

Today, realism, enriched with the experience of the prominent masters of art and literature who have achieved broad and profound generalisations in their creative work, has become historical and social; it analyses the roots and development of social phenomena, the social movements of the masses, the life of the individual, and the prospects of developing these phenomena. Realism has considerably expanded the concepts and definitions prevalent at the time of Diderot, Lessing and Chernyshevsky.

The concept of romanticism has also been radically altered. Instead of glorifying the exploits of an individual hero standing above the crowd, it concentrates on the exploits of the masses engaged in the making of history.

The criteria for judging the activities of both the individual and the masses have also changed,

and the sphere of socio-historical relations between the individual and society has been greatly enlarged. Twentieth-century man bears certain social obligations, and his acts, thoughts, aspirations and desires are a social as well as a personal matter; take, for example, the peace movement, or Africa's struggle to throw off the colonial yoke, both of which have become the common cause of the people.

Such phenomena of life, which are now strikingly reflected in art, could not be expressed without enlarging and supplementing existing aesthetic concepts and categories. Formerly, there were simply no categories in aesthetics that expressed the heroic exploit of the masses, groups or individuals, and the closest to it was probably the category of the exalted. But in the history of aesthetics, the category of the exalted was viewed mainly in the negative sense as far as the ordinary man was concerned, and it overwhelmed him with its greatness as a category of the magnificent and the eternally great. The old concept of the exalted regarded the hero as an outstanding personality with special qualities that enabled him to rise above the masses and rule them, guiding their destiny. Such an individual aroused fear and awe in the masses, making them bow to his will. This concept of the exalted was historically conditioned.

Obviously, such an interpretation of the exalted is quite incompatible with the art of socialist realism, where the hero is at one with the people and where it is inconceivable to see him standing above the masses. In Eisenstein's brilliant film "The Battleship *Potyomkin*", we have an example of mass heroism, when the whole crew makes its choice at the decisive moment. The choice itself, which was made under the incredibly difficult

conditions of a police regime with the violence of the Black-Hundred reactionaries rampant, was a heroic exploit of the battleship's crew. The magnitude of that exploit was not diminished by the fact that, at first, the mutiny was a spontaneous protest against the unbearable conditions of the service, the cane discipline, and the humiliation suffered at the hands of the officers; later, the mutiny developed into conscious activity of the sailors, and the Odessa steps scene culminates in a salvo from the battleship now flying a red flag.

The revolutionary influence of the new life on art was so profound that revolutionary passions even penetrated the art of other than realistic trends, in which new heroes from the ranks of the revolutionary masses were depicted. Immediately after the October Socialist Revolution, works appeared where heroes had the features of certain classes, social groups and strata and were spokesmen for their views. A still rather abstract idea of revolutionary romanticism dominated these works, and heroes often bore a symbolic character, as in Blok's *The Twelve*, Mayakovsky's *Mystery-Bouffe*, Malyshkin's *The Fall of Dair*, and Eisenstein's *Strike*.

In their first post-revolutionary works, realistic writers also subscribed to outward, abstract, revolutionary romanticism; the leather jacket, "iron" will, emphatic imperiousness and unbending resolve are all the indispensable attributes of the heroes of the first years after the Revolution.

In his novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*, N. Ostrovsky expresses revolutionary romanticism most adequately in the figure of Pavel Korchagin. Romanticism here is organically intertwined with real life and struggle, which engendered it. The heroes, who are infused with real, earthly romanticism, are characterised by selfless devotion to the

ideas of the Revolution and by constant readiness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of victory. Korchagin is a striking illustration of the new generation, whose life, character, views and aspirations were shaped by the Revolution.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the new Soviet art was mainly concerned with analysing the sources of the heroism of the masses, and showed how man came to associate himself with the Revolution, while the part he later played in it was a secondary theme. As a rule, the heroes stood for whole classes and social groups which came to accept the Revolution and play a part in it. Thus, in Pudovkin's film "The End of St. Petersburg" and in Dovzhenko's film "Arsenal", the fate of a peasant lad represents the path of the peasantry, and the fate of Timosha, that of the working class. Metaphors, symbols and allegories, characteristic of the art of the 1920s, sprang from the search for a fuller, clearer and a more powerful reflection of the heroic deeds of the masses.

Such films as "Chapayev", "The Maxim Trilogy", "We're from Kronstadt" and "Shchors", which are different in style, genre and aesthetic qualities, all reflect the real role of the masses in the Revolution, showing the people's moral strength and revolutionary deeds as forces which stir man to perform great exploits. A popular hero emerged, who "was part of the people, and who neither stood *above* nor rode *ahead of the other people*."

"That hero is portrayed as the flesh and blood of his own class. He is in that class and with that class, and he does not only *lead* it, but also *reckons* with it; he is a real popular hero."

* S. Eisenstein, *Collected Works* (in six volumes), Russ. ed., Vol. 3, Moscow, 1964, p. 244.

The new popular hero, who is a real discovery of the art of socialist realism, cannot be squeezed into the framework of one, or even all, traditional aesthetic categories. A new aesthetic reality required that old definitions be modified and new categories evolved, for the old definitions of the heroic and the exalted, and the old concept of the relationship between the hero and the masses, do not reveal the aesthetic and actual essence of the heroic as expressed in the art of socialist realism. This art aims to influence the audience and the reader, and thus helps build a new life.

The films "Chapayev" and "We're from Kronstadt", while stressing the importance and greatness of the hero and the heroic masses with him, do not level him down. The hero's image is not dimmed by the masses acting and performing exploits together with him. Indeed, this is new aesthetic material for art. Eisenstein wrote: "It shows that the hero stands on the same level as the ranks that have engendered him, and, thus, the entire people that has begotten him is raised to the same level as the hero."*

We often find artists developing similar aesthetic material in an entirely different artistic key. In the films "Chapayev" and "Shchors", the scenes where the heroes dream have much in common. The Vasilyev brothers, who directed "Chapayev", made everything look as prosaic and realistic as possible, while in "Shchors" Dovzhenko struck an elevated tone, imbuing the scene with an inspired aura of romanticism. Yet in both films the heroes' deeds, thoughts and aspirations, and their inspired way of life have a heroic tone.

This relationship between the hero and the

* Ibid.

people who have begotten him is also a feature of the works on peaceful socialist construction. One of the most important achievements of the art of socialist realism was the discovery of man's heroism in labour and the exposition of the heroic nature of truly free labour. Here, too, the hero comes from the enthusiastic working masses, who are gradually growing aware of their responsibility for their common cause. Heroic labour is the force that transforms man, changes his world outlook, forms new morality in him, and determines his position as the maker of the new world.

That is one of the main differences between the art of socialist realism and formalist art. Soviet art does not merely reflect the transformation of life, but takes an active part in it by influencing and transforming the people who are building the new life. Formalist art seeks to build its own special world in the consciousness of the people, which is divorced from the real life of society. It is a world of illusion, which gives refuge to those who want to get away from the problems and contradictions of the world, from struggle and toil. There is no room for fighters and heroes in the realm of illusion and imaginary well-being because the aspirations, desires and ideals of the characters that people it do not have anything to do with the struggle, activity, resolve and determination of the revolutionaries and remakers of the world. There, ideals are merely ideals, and their realisation is not even intended.

The art of socialist realism is also organically bound with the birth of a new ideal. Moreover, whereas in former ages the aesthetic ideal often differed from and might even be antagonistic to the social ideal, in socialist art they constitute an organic whole. Soviet art expresses the socio-

aesthetic ideal, which has a real basis: it comes from the trends and prospects of the development of social life and the ideal and real aspirations of society. Since the life of society is constantly changing, the socio-aesthetic ideal is never static. Yesterday's ideals have become today's reality. Ideals that have been realised give rise to new aspirations, to new and more perfect aesthetic ideals.

Thus, the subject of art has not only expanded in aesthetic theories, but also in actual practice. New reality, new social forces, new heroes and new ideals are now firmly embodied in books, musical scores, canvases, on stage and screen.

A new concept of what constitutes the heroic appeared in aesthetics as a natural historical and objective outcome; it was an artistic interpretation of acts and deeds, which are prominent by their historical significance and by their influence on the audience and the reader, and which required the utmost spiritual, moral and physical efforts on the part of separate individuals and whole groups and masses, working for the progress of the people, society and mankind. It is closely connected with the aesthetic ideal of socialist art, and is an important expression of the communist concept of personality.

The discoveries, substantiations, and profound artistic expressions of the heroic in literature and art are a contribution made by the art and aesthetics of socialist realism to the artistic and aesthetic culture of the world.

THE TRAGIC IN SOVIET ART

Tragedy centres on man, and his personality. The epic presents a picture of the world, making the age the warp and woof of its fabric; the lyric poem lights up the very depths of the human soul, showing the throbbings of the heart, and the emotions of the author; the subject of tragedy (as indeed of all drama) is the individual in relation to his time. The subject-matter of a tragedy is the inner world of the soul and the objective world outside, perceived and presented by the artist in their intrinsic unity with all their rich and complex interpenetrations.

In treatment of the tragic, socialist realism inherits the traditions of classical realism. It represents man as a tragic character in relation to a definite social class and the age he lives in. To that extent it is similar to old realist art, the difference being that social analysis, one of the most important features of realism as a whole, becomes more profound with application of the historical method. The hero or character of a work is represented not only as a man of his time, not only as a sponge absorbing the essential experience of the age, but also as a creator and transformer of reality. The tragic character is an active personality, who is aware of all the objective conditions and is consciously fighting for his ideals.

Revolution is the basic theme of socialist tragedy. Revolution breaks the bonds of the former order and rouses the consciousness of the masses. The tragic situation, created by the hero's actions, is, in a sense, a revolutionary situation. In contrast

to contemporary critical realism, the social analysis of reality in the art of socialist realism rises to the most essential revolutionary conclusions. Soviet art has as its point of departure Marx's proposition, that revolutionary conflicts are the focal point of modern tragedy.

What lends Soviet art a qualitative distinction is its discovery of a new hero, who represents the lower orders, the working people, and possesses a sharp awareness and a will to struggle. He is neither the "little brother" merely evoking pity, nor a humble person requiring help, nor again a desperate martyr. He is the flesh and blood of the people; he is an active man, and therefore, a real man. The masses do not serve as a background, against which the fine but trying life of the lonely hero unfolds. The people—and they are the be all and end all—are embodied in a whole gallery of active and militant individuals. Nilovna in Gorky's *Mother* is a fine example of the new tragic hero.

The democracy of the art of socialist realism consists in presenting the fate of the ordinary man as that of the people as a whole. In *And Quiet Flows the Don*, for example, Sholokhov shows the great social upheaval that changes everyone's life in the complex web of events and individual destinies. The real heroes are peasants, who are constantly aware of their bond with the soil and are daily guided by it. But this bond gradually changes, and people who were once submissive to the existing state of things, become real revolutionaries and unrelenting fighters who bear the light of truth in their hearts. Men with the sun in their veins, as Gorky called them, are strong in their attachment to the people. The awareness that "I am part of that strength" is the starting-point and a prerequisite of behaviour, and

gives the heroes confidence in victory. The revolutionary theme in Soviet art is based on the immutable objective law set forth by Marxism, that the people are the motive force of history.

The tragic character changes the circumstances of life, and, in the process, is himself remoulded. To the dialectics of the soul, which Chernyshevsky saw in the works of Lev Tolstoi, are added new features and an important new principle, namely, the reproduction of the dialectics of life. The heroic figure, fine individuality, the profound, versatile, active personality, aware of the whole range of given circumstances, is created only in the unity of objective conditions and subjective thinking.

Socialist art is fundamentally opposed to the tragedy of horror. The fatalist sees necessity as a blind, superhuman force that oppresses man. Thus, the tragedy of fate becomes a tragedy of horror, and the hero can only be a victim of fatal circumstances. In the art of socialist realism, the basis of man's behaviour is freedom as an acknowledged necessity. The tragic character in Soviet art does not deny the objective course of history, for his actions would then become pointless; nor does he challenge necessity, as Jean-Paul Sartre thinks, by opposing and rejecting it. The tragic hero is free only when he knows the real causes, the roots of things, and when he is guided by that knowledge in his actions. Thus, the hero's *conscious* behaviour is the main distinguishing feature of Soviet tragedy. He chooses his own path and is responsible for his actions.

Socialist realist tragedy shows us the unity between the general condition of the world and the tragic character. The general condition, being an objective factor, influences the character. The tragic character, influencing and transforming external circumstances into an inner condition

of his life, runs into conflict with reality and other men, thereby creating a tragic situation. The hero *makes a choice*. But freedom of choice, which now occupies a large place in idealist aesthetics and is alleged to be the live nerve of tragic action, does not mean that a decision is made at random: it is based on real knowledge. Freedom of choice is nothing more than individual comprehension of necessity, i.e., everyone assesses the state of things in his own particular way. At the same time, necessity is both identical with freedom and opposed to it. Freedom of choice, based on the individual concept of necessity, excludes fatalism. The tragic hero is entirely responsible for his choice. The tragic character makes his choice and shapes his own fate.

Take Venka Malyshev (in P. Nilin's *Cruelty*), who condemned himself to death for a failure which was probably due to unforeseen circumstances. He shouldered the responsibility because he could not deceive those who had trusted him and believed in the idea of a new life. He is sentenced by the merciless judgement of his conscience. Tanabai (in Genghiz Aitmatov's *Farewell, Gulsary!*) repeatedly makes his own choice. He volunteers to do the hardest work, because that is how he sees his duty as a Communist, and takes an irreconcilable stand against all falsehood. He gives the bitter truth straight to anyone who tries to cover up his pusillanimity with high-flown words. We see for ourselves from that work, which is the fruit of the author's thoughts and feelings arrived at through much suffering, that the strength of the new system has always lain in those rank-and-file fighters of the revolution, who view it as their cause, conviction and guiding principle, outside of which there is no life.

Thus, the tragic is represented as a measure of

freedom. Since man is essentially an aggregate of social relationships the measure of an individual's freedom is the measure of social freedom. The tragic hero confirms freedom of action and serves the freedom of the whole of society, his death showing the measure of that freedom. Revolutionary activity, which transforms reality, is therefore not just the theme of a tragedy, but also the main principle in artistic creation, the artist's ideal.

The Communist Party spirit is strikingly revealed in the tragic work of art. The tragic hero proves the rightness of his cause at the cost of his life, and paves the way for overcoming the difficulties that hinder the development of society as a whole. Soviet art shows man transforming reality and creating a new life. The artist's social ideal is expressed through the tragic hero, who views it as his own personal cause. The communist ideal becomes a personal enthusiasm, expressive of the profound social demands of the age and the vital requirements of the day.

The Communist struggling for the bright future of his nation and the world, is a character distinctive of socialist tragedy. Soviet art, which closely observes the new life in the making, has created the striking figure of the Communist devoted to his ideal and fighting for its realisation. He is a people's leader who is at one with the masses, quickly grasps their thoughts, and knows by what means to achieve their common aim. He is a man who is being moulded in the process of building the new life. At the same time, he has a striking personality with a powerful intellect and depth of feeling, which win him respect and give him the right to lead the movement. Among the many such figures that have earned a place in the treasure-house of Soviet art are Davydov (in

Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Uplturned*), Chapayev (in Furmanov's *Chapayev*), Levinson (in *The Rout*, by A. Fadeyev), and Vasily Gubanov (in the film "Communist").

Tragedy is contradiction, an irreconcilable contradiction created by the clash of opposed forces. Conflict lies at the heart of tragic action. Tragic conflict surpasses all other types of conflict in the acuteness and depth of the problems facing the hero. Its poignancy and power are the main criteria of the tragic work of art. The best works of Soviet art have provided solutions of vital conflicts which may further the growth of everyone's awareness. The artist has access to all the spheres of reality, and tragedy can arise out of any of life's contingencies: the revolutionary transformation of the old world, love and jealousy, the building of a new life, and matters of conscience. The tragic theme in art is as broad as life itself. But tragedy emerges and is justified only where there is deep contradiction. In Soviet society, class antagonisms have been eliminated; but they appear, above all, wherever Soviet man confronts the forces of the hostile world. The war against fascism and the defence of the country are the theme of many works of socialist realism. The Young Guards (*The Young Guard*, by A. Fadeyev), the first generation to grow up in socialist society become a symbol of Soviet man and his inflexible will to victory, of the strength that finally broke the fascist machine of coercion and brutality, and safeguarded the very existence of the Soviet state. In K. Simonov's novel *Dead and Alive*, the tragedy of war is depicted as a national tragedy.

However, tragedy is not only social, but psychological and moral antagonism too. In that case, it is a conflict between men who share the same

views on major questions, but differ about the means to be used in achieving the end.

The fact that the conflict arises in a society that has eliminated social antagonism does not mean that it becomes a casual or transient phenomenon unworthy of notice. It has its rightful place in life. At the same time it has specific features. Its development and solution are possible and real within that society, whereas many of the conflicts in bourgeois reality spring from the state of things, which provide for irreconcilable contradictions that can only be solved by destroying that reality.

The tragic solution of a conflict shows the hero to be right and affords satisfaction to the reader or spectator. Catharsis deepens our knowledge of the world and enriches us with new social experience. This is where the social force of tragedy's influence lies. The death of a fine individual is tragic, yet in his struggle and achievement we have an example of an inflexible and steadfast will, a hymn to dignity and courage. The paradox of tragedy is based on the dual, or even contradictory nature of the aesthetic feeling it produces: the scene where the hero dies gives aesthetic satisfaction and arouses the strongest feeling of protest, and, thus, gives us a more thorough understanding of the real meaning of human life.

The tragic in Soviet art is not always entirely expressed in the heroic character. There are cases where the tragic element appears to be woven into the very fabric of a work and expresses the artist's attitude to ideas and thoughts, although the hero's fate is not essentially tragic. The hero of N. Dubov's *Fugitive* is a child. Through his eyes, the reader sees the humdrum existence of his parents and neighbours, this little backwater

of narrow interests and egoistic attitudes being invaded by the great new life. There is no doubt that this little backwater will be invaded by the profound changes in Soviet reality, but the lives of many men will undergo a drastic change in the process and some of them will become stronger as a result, while others will perish. However, while it lasts, this little backwater influences the child's heart, crippling it, and damning everyone who will not adapt himself to that wretched way of life and thinking.

Socialist tragedy is permeated with proletarian humanism. This is the main thing in which it differs from modern tragedy in the West. The problems set forth in a work of art as requiring a final solution are unlikely to prove solvable. The motive force in Jean-Paul Sartre's play *The Dead Without Burial* is the conflict between the cause one serves and the necessity to use force with a character, who is likely to betray that cause through weakness. As was to be expected, the conflict turns out to be unsolvable. Hence the conclusion, reached by contemporary existentialism, that life as such is entirely tragic. The same applies to Stanley Kramer's film "Judgement at Nuremberg", which raises many burning questions, especially this one: Are those representatives of the United States who are responsible for the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki entitled to pronounce judgement upon crimes against humanity? If they are, then they should also be tried. If not, then fascism can be justified. The film, at least as regards the questions raised and the fact that it draws attention to them, is an important work distinguished by civic awareness. It also convincingly demonstrates the inadequacy of the abstract humanism that forms the basis of the trial and represents the author's standpoint.

The art of socialist realism is permeated with the spirit of proletarian humanism. It does not slur over the difficulties, but seeks solutions in the concrete historical conditions. These solutions are not claimed to be valid for all time; they are relative, not absolute, taking into account the constant renewal of life and a study of the developing situation. However, this is far removed from subjectivist adaptation to circumstances.

The realist humanism of Soviet art, which is especially evident in tragedy, consists in the fact that man is an aim in himself, and that all his aims and activities are geared to the triumph of the *human* element. But the individual is not a creature who takes refuge outside the world; his activity is collective, and the fine personality's death, evoking sorrow, enriches the life of other people, the whole of society, and makes human life fuller. Socialist tragedy's humanism affirms the fulness of man's life and the richness of his inner world. It is historically conditioned and engendered by the socialist proletariat's everyday activities. Man, taken as an inseparable part of a class, gives all his strength and thoughts to that class. His death is tragic, but it shows the correctness and soundness of the cause. Abstract humanism tries to find in every man something that is common to all mankind, and, thus, it departs from the concrete man. Socialist humanism is based on the concrete man acting in a concrete situation, and it studies not only the individual but also the whole environment. Proceeding from the transformation of circumstances, it not only sees the aims, but also shows the actual ways of achieving them.

In aesthetic thought in the past, tragedy has very often been equated with death and suffering, despondency and despair. Undoubtedly, suffering

and death are elements of tragedy, but if that is all there is to it, then what is the use of any struggle and resistance? Modern idealist aesthetics draws the conclusion that the pessimistic world outlook is identical with the essence of tragedy and with tragedy itself in any of its forms. But there was also another interpretation of the tragic in the aesthetics and artistic practice of the past, that directly opposed this pessimistic world outlook. Indeed, the tragic hero dies, but then man dies in ordinary circumstances, as a result of the natural process of ageing. To regard death as the sole criterion of the tragic is to reason from the standpoint of death, and not from that of life.

Socialist tragedy is optimistic. Indeed, one of the first works of Soviet art was Vsevolod Vishnevsky's *An Optimistic Tragedy*. The historical optimism of Soviet art is conditioned by the objective progressive development of Soviet society; it is based on a scientific theory which discloses the objective laws governing the development of human society, and is inspired by the bright ideals of communism. Although the death of the beautiful is tragic, it does not interrupt, but, on the contrary, enriches the process of social development. Tragedy shows man passing through terrible trials and ordeals, but it also shows examples of an unbending will and steadfastness. It is not only an affirmation of the social value of life, but is also an apotheosis of Man. In the art of socialist realism unforgettable characters have been created, who did not spare themselves in standing up for a life that is truly worthy of man. They pass before us, each carrying in himself a part of the bright future that has become our present. We owe them our lives, and they are a part of our own life as contemporaries and teachers.

THE COMIC

The comic has its roots in contradiction of a socially significant kind: the contradiction between end and means, form and content, action and circumstances, substance and its manifestation, which is the object of special, emotionally charged, aesthetic criticism.

Throughout the history of aesthetic thought the comic appears as the result of contrast, "discord" and contradiction between the ugly and the beautiful (Aristotle), the insignificant and the sublime (Kant), absurdity and reason (Jean Paul), infinite predetermination and infinite arbitrariness (Schelling), image and idea (Fischer), the automatic and the live (Bergson), the worthless and that which lays claim to worth (Folkelt), freedom and necessity (Ast, Schutze), the trivial and the great (Lipps), that which is false and transient and that which is significant, constant and true (Hegel), internal emptiness and externals laying claim to significance (Chernyshevsky). The contradictions from which the comic springs are many and various.

The comic in art is characterised by a highly developed critical sense. Laughter is a special, emotionally charged form of criticism, an aesthetic form of criticism. The *special* nature of the ideological and emotional criticism contained in laughter lies, primarily, in the fact that this criticism consciously demands *active* appreciation on the part of the audience. This is why laughter is an extraordinarily intelligible, infectious and biting form of criticism. In his summary notes on

the Lectures on the Nature of Religion Lenin made the comment "very apt!" against Feuerbach's remark that a witty style of writing makes the reader himself reconstruct the relations, conditions and limitations for which the phrase in question is valid.

A true sense of humour demands high *aesthetic ideals* (otherwise humour degenerates into cynicism, ribaldry, vulgarity and obscenity). It is essential for a true appreciation of the comic that the reader should himself make a mental contrast of the phenomenon exposed to ridicule with the aesthetic ideal.

Laughter is "a very powerful weapon, as nothing enfeebles vice more than the knowledge that it has been unmasked and become the object of ridicule"*: "...laughter is a most devastating weapon; in Voltaire's hands it struck and burnt like a flash of lightning. It casts down idols and gods, and turns the miracle-performing icon into a dark, wretched little picture".**

Humour is national in character. All its historical, national, class and universal human elements combine to form a single, complex, ideological whole. The active expression of humour is wit.

The psychological and physiological mechanism of laughter is most distinctive. Laughter provoked by comedy is "joyful amazement", the exact opposite of rapture and admiration. It is sharpened by criticism—amazement with a minus sign. Laughter is the expression of delight at mastering the contradictions of reality. The comic in art is a means of revealing social contradictions.

* N. Shchedrin (M. Y. Saltykov), *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 13, Leningrad, 1936, p. 270.

** A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works and Letters*, Russ. ed., Vol. 10, Petrograd, 1919, p. 12.

Kant emphasised that the ridiculous springs from the *sudden* resolution of tense expectation into nothing. Unexpectedness is an important element in the comic.

Comedy is one of the fruits of the development of civilisation and one of the highest forms of social consciousness. Laughter is democratic by nature and a powerful weapon for progress by virtue of its great critical force. It is one of the most potent and effective weapons against prejudice and delusion.

* * *

There are two basic types of approach to the comic in art corresponding to the nature of the subject matter and the aims of the author, namely satire and humour.

Satire is the biting exposure of everything that does not correspond to the highest political, aesthetic and moral ideals; angry ridicule of everything that stands in the way of their complete realisation. It rejects the object of ridicule totally and contrasts it with the ideal. Humour, on the other hand, detects certain aspects in the object which correspond to the ideal. The object remains acceptable, although it deserves criticism. Whilst approving of the object in essence, humour strives to perfect it and cleanse it of all shortcomings, thereby revealing more clearly all that which is socially valuable. Humour, although not without its bite, is friendly laughter. It is, however, an entirely different matter when the whole phenomenon, and not merely one single aspect of it, is negative, reactionary, socially dangerous and capable of inflicting serious damage on society. There is no place for friendly laughter here. Such phenomena call for laughter of a scathing, trenchant and satirical kind.

There is a whole range of different shades of laughter between humour and satire, such as sarcasm, joking and ridicule, all of which correspond to the aesthetic riches of reality. The degree, shade and aim of laughter is determined by the subject matter and the artist's ideological and aesthetic principles.

* * *

The most important elements of the comic are to be found in a study of its sources. The syncretic laughter of the comos not only expressed people's joy in living, but was also a means of asserting their mastery over nature and a way of regulating relations between human beings and preserving human happiness.

In ancient literature it was the writer himself who appeared as the lyrical hero of satire. Criticism proceeded from the "I". It was the personal impressions, likes and dislikes of the writer that were the starting-point of ancient satire.

The highly developed statehood of Rome inevitably called for normative thinking and assessment, a clear division between good and evil, the positive and the negative (Juvenal). The starting-point of satirical analysis became normative ideas about an expedient world order.

In the Renaissance it was man who became the measure of the condition of the world. Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* is written in accordance with the principle of satire characteristic of the Renaissance. Folly is the subject as well as the object of satire. "Ordinary", "moderate" human folly, folly "in measure" judges and punishes, humiliates and ridicules folly of the immoderate, unreasonable, inhuman kind.

Man, his "natural origin" seen without bigotry, his natural state and requirements—these are the measure of things, the measure of all values. And

it is precisely this human nature, full of physical and spiritual strength, exuding intelligence and feeling, which is liberated in the gay, bold, frivolous, bawdy, daring, joyous laughter of Rabelais.

On the threshold of the impending capitalist division of labour, Cervantes exposed the tragic and comic human consequences of this division into mental and physical work: the dogmatism of culture, its alienation from the practical experience of the people, the fanatic devotion to ideas which were not affirmed by the life of the people. Life is rich and complex, and it is ideas that should find their affirmation in life, not life that should be measured by and subject to preconceived, dogmatic ideas.

Cervantes's *Don Quixote* took the form of a satirical epic discussing vital human problems and portraying a sweeping, realistic panorama of the life and morals of the time. The ability to absorb life at its various levels, to organise all this material into a clear cross-section "from one particular angle" and to study the very condition of the world through the medium of satire—all these possibilities inherent in satire were discovered and, in a sense, created by Cervantes. It was he who said that satire is not merely an aesthetic attitude to life, but a means of analysing the historical process and creating an artistic conception of the world.

In the classical period satirical generalisation showed abstract, negative features in contrast with the virtues. Satire fed on hypocrisy, ignorance and misanthropy, etc. (Molière). Criticism became based on abstract moral and aesthetic standards.

The criticism of enlightenment satire was directed against the "imperfection of the world" and the "imperfection of human nature". The

capitalist division of labour was beginning to exert an increasing influence on social development. As the relationship between man and the world around him grew more and more complex demanding a human giant, so the increasing division of labour makes work more standardised, relegating man to an isolated, limited role. Swift's Gulliver was an excellent illustration of this new stage of development. A man-mountain, he is a match for all the giants of the Renaissance. But it is significant that only Gulliver's common sense is used to make a satirical analysis of the age, not the whole figure with all its strong and weak points. It is also significant that although Gulliver is a giant in the land of the Lilliputs, he talks as if he were a Lilliput in the land of giants. For Swift human power and greatness are relative, and this is the reason why he uses common sense as the measure for good and evil and as the fundamental criterion for a satirical analysis of the world.

Romanticism showed that the unfortunate condition of the world had become the "condition of the soul". Romantic satire was an artistic investigation into the state of the soul. Irony became the main form of satire, and Heine's self-satire appeared on the scene. Criticism proceeded from ideas of the unrealisable perfection of the world against which the individual, his spiritual riches and moral qualities are measured, and from ideas of the unrealisable perfection of the individual against which the world is measured. A strange, scintillating effect was produced by criticism constantly shifting from the world to the individual and from the individual back to the world. Irony was replaced by self-irony, and self-irony in its turn developed into world scepticism. The world scepticism of romantic satire is the counterpart of *Weltschmerz* in romantic tragedy.

The satire of critical realism delved deep into the spiritual world of man which had become extremely complex absorbing all aspects of reality. It penetrated to the very core of the psychological process. Satire became one of the means of typifying life. It invaded the whole of art and became a special kind of literature. The whole critical trend in Russian literature resounded with satirical pathos. A developed aesthetic ideal became the foundation of satirical criticism. The ideal absorbed the people's ideas about life, the aims and highest forms of social development and the people's conception of man. This firm inclusion of the people's outlook on life as one of the fundamentals of satire was achieved by realism. Satire had learnt to make a contrast between its object and the life of the people with all its possibilities and potential.

Gogol measured the state of the world with laughter. His satire seems to be answering the question: in what sort of condition is the world if it allows evil and those people and circumstances which provoke such intense hatred and fury as the object of ridicule? In Gogol's own words, his satire brought "Russians face to face with Russia" and man face to face with mankind.

Gogol won a place for Russian satire in world literature. Shchedrin then went a step further in the development of satire by using psychological analysis as a means of satirical investigation.

The future became the ideal of Soviet satire.

The finale of Mayakovsky's *Bathhouse* and *Bedbug* is communism.

The plays are completely invaded by the future and their very action strives towards that which is to come. Mayakovsky's satire represents a qualitative advance in the point of departure for the comic analysis of reality.

Modernist literature has created "a-satire" which ridicules ideals from the point of view of the egocentric, self-absorbed individual. Life is absurd; there is no future—just a continuous present. There is no development at all, so that the goals of social development are meaningless. Time has collapsed and stopped. Ideals, human striving and aspirations, naturally enough, become the objects of ridicule. That which harms society and against which the weapon of laughter should be directed is ignored by modernist satire. Evil is irrational and incognisable. This is indicative of the impotence of modernism in the face of the complexity of reality and its refusal to transform the world.

Soviet satire is directed against everything which is hostile to the unity of the individual and society, man and the world, and socialism.

Each literary age produces its own principles and foundations for criticism. "Personal affinity" (Aristophanes); the idea of the most expedient world order (Juvenal); measure (Cervantes, Erasmus and Rabelais); standards (Molière); common sense (Swift); unrealisable perfection (Heine); the ideal (Gogol and Shchedrin); the future (Mayakovsky)—this is the hard path of historical change in the bases of satirical analysis of reality.

This historical process is accompanied, with temporary setbacks, by a progressive extension of the ideal based on ever-widening levels of reality and on the constantly developing spiritual riches of the individual. This ideal is becoming more and more democratic, absorbing the people's ideas about the right way to live, about good and beauty as opposed to evil and the aesthetically ugly.

Man uses comedy to punish the imperfections of the world with laughter, to smile upon its engaging shortcoming and to exult in the joy of living.

AESTHETICS AND MORALITY

The question of aesthetics and morality is of great philosophic and practical significance, for it deals with the unity of two of the more complex aspects of human consciousness and activity, two kinds of human values and their ultimate synthesis in behaviour, on the one hand, and art, on the other.

When we speak of aesthetic consciousness and activity, of moral consciousness and activity, we are by no means inferring that consciousness exists independent of activity and vice versa. Thinking is an action in itself, while an action is in turn directed, fixed and appraised in thought. They can be distinguished and separated only in abstraction, when subjected to logical analysis. Consciousness is ultimately a reflection of reality, spontaneous or purposeful, immediate or indirect, concretely sensual or logical, emotional or rational, as the case may be. Aesthetic consciousness does not separate the objective from the subjective, reflection from appraisal, the logical from the concretely sensual, the rational from the emotional. In other words, aesthetic consciousness is synthetic by its very nature. Its most signal, stable and massive element is the aesthetic ideal as man's notion (and since man is the "sum total of social relationships", the notion of a class and entire society) of the aesthetic perfection of a sphere or a particular phenomenon of reality.

The aesthetic ideal is invariably a model of actually existing objects and relationships intended to elicit their scale, harmony and beauty.

The aesthetic ideal is the result of the search for an optimal variant of the correlation of content and form, essence and phenomenon, the quantitative and qualitative aspects of a socially important phenomenon of reality. The formal-cum-quantitative structure of the ideal is by no means indifferent to its content-cum-qualitative aspect, a fact that has been brilliantly expressed in art in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and in theory in Chernyshevsky's well-known treatise *Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality*.

In turn, the content-cum-qualitative aspect of the aesthetic ideal—especially in so far as it is a reflection of men's actions and relations—necessarily includes certain moral aspects. However, the latter are not reflected and expressed in the aesthetic ideal directly, in the form of moral principles, norms and opinions, but "relayed" through a reproduction of certain patterns of behaviour in imagination and through their specifically aesthetic interpretation.

The presence of moral content in the aesthetic ideal automatically gives a moral aspect to aesthetic perception too, since the latter is none other than finding the aesthetic ideal in relation to external reality, the initial stage of the aesthetic self-assertion of a person (class, society).

The moral aspect can most easily be observed in the appraisal of social phenomena. An exquisite thing which is absolutely perfect from the formally aesthetic point of view loses all value and integrity in the eyes of observers if they see it to be incompatible with accepted moral norms. However, in perceiving purely natural objects, too, we first of all try to find in them some moral qualities which, even if in fact non-existent, have for us an illusion of reality (a "modest" flower, a

"noble" stone, etc.); secondly, we are apt to mould the image and the idea of the phenomenon we perceive to some underlying moral pattern. This is particularly apparent in people with poetic talent, and may well be one of the chief elements of the latter.

Since man asserts his aesthetic ideal not only in perceiving external reality but also in remaking it, it may be logically inferred that everything to which man's activities extend may have a certain moral significance.

This, however, is merely a possibility, for the extent to which it can be realised does not depend so much on the aesthetic ideal as on the object in which this ideal is sought and embodied. So far as the utilitarian contradicts the aesthetic, it limits this possibility. This circumstance prompts one to suppose that the very emergence of applied art before professional art has been a historically natural resolution of this contradiction.

Another major direction of human aesthetic activity is man's own remodelling of himself in line with the aesthetic ideal of society, class or individual. As in the former case, this ideal may be stable, conscious and distinct; but it may also be at various levels of approximation to this state, not excluding the lowest possible. At that initial stage of its development the aesthetic ideal finds expression only in a desire to be liked and to match the paragons of behaviour that are closest at hand. Hence its instability, vagueness and liability to quick and sudden change.

In moulding and remoulding one's behaviour (from the manner of dressing, talking, walking, etc., to taking decisions involving grave responsibility and even self-sacrifice) in keeping with definite aesthetic standards one is already much more of an artist than in producing use-values.

Behaviour is not only the expression of the objective necessity to act "just so" but also the creation of images in accordance with definite aesthetic models. In this lifelong act of creation, the individual himself or, rather, that which others are able to observe and perceive in him plays the part of "expressive means".

Therefore, the impression one makes on one's surroundings consists of two components—one's intrinsic being, that is, one's world outlook, moral standards, beliefs and emotions, on the one hand, and a range of phenomena Stanislavsky called "physical actions", on the other. The latter, in turn, can also convey both one's essence and one's own idea of it. Thus, the aesthetic and moral elements may not only be united in human behaviour, but may also be opposed. The prevalence of one type of relation or the other largely follows from the nature of the social system. The unity of individual and social interests promotes the tendency towards a general harmonisation of human behaviour, while their antagonism increases the probability of a rift between the aesthetic and moral aspects of an action.

The above-mentioned forms in the assertion of the aesthetic ideal merely accompany various kinds of utilitarian human activities. Only in art does the aesthetic self-assertion of the individual (and of a class or society) become an end in itself, independent and free of restrictions imposed by utilitarian purposes.

In art, the aesthetic ideal asserts itself either through a direct reflection of reality (as in painting, sculpture, the theatre), or indirectly (as in music, architecture and dancing), and presupposes an appraisal of reality. The content of art, accordingly, includes the vital element (reflection)

and the ideological-emotional element (appraisal), the objective and subjective aspects. However, Marxist understanding of subjectivity is different in principle from its idealist understanding. Marxist aesthetics does not regard the subjective as a self-contained entity, independent of the material world and even primary in relation to it, but as resulting from the reflection of objective conditions of the historical and individual development of the personality. Therefore, the difference between the objective and subjective aspects of the content of art is not absolute but relative, practically amounting to the difference between a spontaneous reflection of external reality and one shaped as world outlook, emotions, tastes, etc.

Since art is always the assertion of a definite aesthetic ideal (that of a class, in the case of class society), it always carries with it a corresponding moral ideal; it is not only aesthetically but also morally "contagious". Moreover, art, as reflection of reality, concentrates first of all on man, on human relationships, on moral conflicts and problems. Thus, neither the vital nor the ideological-emotional content of art (neither its objective nor its subjective content) is or can be exclusively aesthetic. It organically includes also the moral element and, by the same token, the political, philosophical, religious or atheistic and other elements.

The moral and general social principles are also largely inherent in the process of art perception by readers, spectators and listeners. Maxim Gorky described this process, concisely and most aptly, as artistic co-production. The creative function of one apprehending a work of art is first of all to use his imagination and artistic ability in order to complete and continue in space and time the

characters, scenes and subjects presented in a picture, book or play. For instance, a portrait depicts but a brief moment in a person's life, but an imaginative viewer will read a whole life story from it.

Another, and even more important, aspect of this kind of co-production is that readers, spectators and listeners enrich the content of a work of art with their own life experience which they comprehend and go through again in the light of the story. If a person reads *Anna Karenina* at seventeen or eighteen and then again at fifty, the impact will certainly be much greater at the second reading because his broader experience, including his aesthetic experience, will make his perceptions incomparably sharper.

The interaction between the work of art and life experience of the percipient greatly increases the moral and educational influence of art and creates more opportunities for making aesthetic pleasure serve the purpose of moral improvement.

Even so, the moral and aesthetic elements in art—as in other aesthetic spheres—may not only form a unity, but also be at variance. The contradiction arises when either the aesthetic standards and the moral content of a work fail to correspond or the aesthetic (and consequently moral) potentialities of a work and the percipient's ability to realise them fail to correspond. Certainly such contradictions (of which we have named the main) affect both the value of a work and the intensity of feeling it evokes.

Music's direct connection with reality is to be sought in the uniting properties inherent in it. This uniting power is displayed in all compositions of genuine worth, and in the everyday influence of music. It is most clearly evident in music accompanying work, in heroic songs, in marches calling men to battle and in country dances which are a necessary part of every festive gathering. Next to these traditional genres which have existed for centuries, I would name the Soviet popular song which, though connected with these genres by ties of succession, is yet an entirely new and essentially different genre. It was created mainly by Russian composers and poets and so they endowed it with the new traits of the Russian national character—the traits of the Russian socialist nation, but since the popular song expressed the spirit common to all Soviet people, this genre became adopted by our multinational country in its entirety. These common features prevail over the local characteristics which link one song or another with the town or the countryside and prove their relatively more direct succession to the traditional themes and intonations: rural, as in Zakharov's songs, and urban, as in Dunayevsky's songs. In this process of development from the national-local or the class-differentiated into the countrywide lies the principle of Soviet culture as a whole—the principle of the national growing into the international. It is not surprising, therefore, that with its socialistically internationalist pattern of

imagery the Soviet popular song—the finest specimens, naturally—has spread beyond the U.S.S.R., won popularity with people abroad, and has actually struck root in some foreign countries.

Let us now turn to Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony. It was first performed during the war in besieged Leningrad (the composer's birthplace) with Karl Eliasberg conducting, and after that in Moscow, Kuibyshev, Saratov and other Soviet cities, and then in the United States (Arturo Toscanini conducting). The numerous performances and broadcast recordings of the Seventh Symphony both in the Soviet Union and abroad united with strong though invisible ties all the freedom-loving peoples who had risen in struggle against fascism. This symphony became the "musical banner" of the great anti-fascist battle. The bounds of its uniting influence were thereby defined: they corresponded on the whole to the boundary separating the world of twentieth century progressive humanism (socialist and democratic) from the world of anti-human fascism.

The uniting influence of music stems from its unique generalisation of images. I stress the word unique, because generalisation as such is common to all artistic imagery. In art, generalisation is unthinkable without concreteness, and musical images—just as the images in all the other spheres of art—must reflect reality in their own manner. The specific character of each sphere of art and its specific manner of generalisation must be explained by the absence of uniformity in rendering the different aspects of reality and by the greater or lesser degree of excellence in their artistic presentation.

For comparison, let us take music and painting.

An artist (say Aivazovsky or Delacroix), painting the scene of a shipwreck would seem to be depicting just that one moment, but this moment is a result of something which went before and is, at the same time, the beginning of something to come. Thus, the painting reveals to the viewer not simply that one given moment alone but also, indirectly, the process of movement in time. The complex emotions of the artist are always revealed through the object-filled world. In music it is the other way about: man's emotional state, processes of movement and relations engendered by these processes (including psychological processes) bring you to the world of tangible objects, to a relative immobility. It is an inevitable, logical course, because movement is possible only as the movement of something definite, material; relations—only as relations between objectively existing entities; emotions—only as the emotions of people sufficiently well defined in the socio-historical sense; and sound—as a signal coming from a definite source.* The sea-painting composer conveys the emotions evoked in men by the movement of the sea, the rhythm of the rolling waves which is generally common to it and the typical sounds. And the image is conjured up—a complete, integral image of the sea, as, for instance, in the music of Rimsky-Korsakov, Mendelssohn, Liszt and Wagner. That which music gives a close-up of in the most concrete forms, painting**

* It may be supposed that music is a specific "signal system" (Pavlov). To understand music thus one must also understand the essence of its artistic imagery.

** This refers to sculpture too. This is what Romain Rolland said about Mukhina's group "The Worker and the Collective-Farm Woman": "...two young Soviet giants impulsively raise the hammer and sickle and we hear a heroic hymn pouring forth from their lips, a hymn that

presents indirectly, as background, and vice versa.

The advantages of one sphere of art over another are based not only on the ability, peculiar to art alone, to paint an impressive foreground image. A distant view also has its advantages because it allows the viewer to grasp a great deal at a glance, and to appreciate the general picture which it is rather difficult to do in a close-up owing to the abundance of details. And finally, what is particularly important is that this system of close and distant views in music, painting and all the other arts reflects reality in different planes, focusing attention on its various aspects.

We begin by perceiving the given "part" or "aspect" of the object offered us, and gradually we come to perceive it as a whole—such is one of the essential laws of how reality is apprehended by the mind. Consequently, each of the arts reflecting different aspects of reality in this or that measure of expressiveness leads to an aesthetic cognition of the reflected reality.

In music the inner world of man (or people), the processes of movement, that which sounds and that which can be heard, are rendered more distinctly, concretely and in a less indirect manner than the other aspects of reality, but this is not all that the specific character of musical portrayal implies. Music expresses everything in its own way, in a way differing from the other arts. For example,

calls people to freedom, to solidarity, to victory." (This comment was made in the visitors' book at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1937.) The two figures are not portrayed as singing at all, and so Romain Rolland's words may be taken as a free metaphor. Yet it is not simply a metaphor. The heroic mood of a hymn which the group does, in fact, convey justifies the impression gained by the French writer.

let us take the inner world of man, the psyche, which must be embodied in all and every sphere of art and the more so in music.

The psyche is compounded of emotion, will and intellect, and these three are embodied in music in a unique manner.

It must be pointed out that music does not merely excite emotion in the listener nor is it simply conceived by the composer in the course of a more or a less emotional creative process, but it actually carries emotions in itself.* Music can express any range of emotion—from tension to serenity, from joy to sorrow, from pleasure to displeasure, but only if it is a highly concentrated emotion, a condensate, so to speak. Insipid, shallow emotions, which are not reflectable except indirectly, are alien to the very character of music with its possibilities and abilities to choose.

Poetry alone can rival music to some extent in the artistic rendering of concentrated emotions. The well-known maxim that music begins where the spoken word ends, is not quite justified. Music can also embrace that sphere of feelings which can be expressed in words, that is if they are big feelings. But even poetry, using word symbols, can by no means always catch and record the more subtle changes of emotion. This is done by music, and done, moreover, with a concreteness that is beyond the reach of any other form of art. Music is also all-powerful in rendering the more generalised states of mind. While word symbols prove to be insufficiently precise and

* Recognition of the emotional content of music makes one of the main distinctions between progressive aesthetics and the aesthetics (for instance, Hanslick in the 19th century) of formalism, which in this given question found supporters in Stravinsky and Hindemith, contrary to what they practise and in spite of their other views.

concrete and yet too broad in meaning to portray an emotional micro-world, these same word symbols prove to be too concretely precise and narrow to convey the more generalised emotions. Such definitions, for instance, as "festive solemnity" or "sinister grimness" very often give a correct but still an insufficiently accurate idea of the corresponding emotions. Music conveys these emotions far more convincingly, not only when thus briefly defined but also when they belong to highly developed literary images.

The means by which music can make the most sweeping emotional generalisations, are also used in rendering volitional processes; in music they are presented in their most general manner and not embodied with such "everyday" thoroughness as in literature, the theatre and the cinema. It must be borne in mind, however, that "will" does exist and this becomes evident as a musical composition unfolds, and that *volitional processes* are given a very concrete rendering indeed.

The sufficient clarity with which music records emotions and will, allows *musical intonation* to be defined as a direct expression of emotions and will—as distinct from words which are a direct expression of thought. But if sound only served the purpose of expressing spontaneous emotionality or spontaneous impulses of will, and was not subjected to an intellectual treatment, the musical organism would not have even this primary "cell" known as intonation.

The role of the *intellectual* principle begins to grow as soon as we pass on from intonation to an integral musical image, growing and developing to the level and magnitude of an idea. For example, not just the words of a song (an integral poetic image or even a pattern of images) but also the music of a song (an integral musical image)

contain an idea—simple enough in one case, and quite complex in another. Large-scale, monumental genres and forms, presupposing a complex, developed pattern of musical images, offer the greatest scope for the implementation of the intellectual principle. Music cannot express a complex, developed idea as concisely as can the language of words. It takes an intricate pattern of musical images—shown in comparison, in conflict, and in change—to bring out a definite idea which, although generalised, will be perfectly clear. (For example, in Beethoven's Third and Fifth symphonies, Chaikovsky's Fourth and Sixth, Myaskovsky's Sixth and Twenty-Seventh, and Shostakovich's Fifth, Seventh and Eleventh).

In music, the intellectual principle manifests itself mostly as a peculiar, specifically musical logic. In reflecting reality, music gives a very full and pliant rendering of the *relations* between its different aspects and the different levels of development of one or many of these aspects, and this—within the range of mental acquisitiveness—relates music to logic,* to literature (dramaturgy included), and, unexpected though it may sound, to architecture: the logical generalisation of relations in time and processes of movement is given with the greatest consistency and clarity in music, and that of relations in space and forms—in architecture.

* Let us recall what Lenin said:

"The *totality* of all sides of the phenomenon, of reality and their (reciprocal) *relations*—that is what truth is composed of. The relations (=transitions=contradictions) of notions=the main content, *by which* these concepts (and their relations, traditions, contradictions) are shown as a reflection of the objective world." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 196.)

For all the dissimilarity of the processes of development taking place in musical compositions, these processes have something in common, bringing out, as they do, definite kinds or forms of relations within the musical image or between the musical images—a *specifically musical logic* of relations, reflecting the logic of reality itself.

By virtue of its very nature music mainly interprets fluid phenomena, different processes of movement, including psychological processes. The fluid character of sounds and sound relations could not be better suited for the sensuously concrete “materialisation” of images which mainly reflect these aspects of reality.*

The character of musical material stipulates the need of *performance* as a special form of creativity. It was generally held that in view of the “fading” properties of musical sound and even of a whole musical composition there had to be a great many performers and performances: the composition had to be repeated by the same or by other performers, otherwise it would be short-lived, ephemeral. The appearance of mechanical sound-recording conclusively proved that which was quite evident before: that there was a continuous social demand for musical performance, for numerous performances of one and the same composition, and that no performance, however wonderful, repeated over and over again could take the place of numerous *different* performances. Even Prokofiev’s own playing of his Piano Con-

* For comparison, let us take painting and sculpture: they show spatially visible phenomena either in a state of tranquillity or in movement, from which one moment alone has been isolated, recorded and memorised for all time. Material that is visible and unchangeable in volume is best suited for this purpose: for instance, marble, granite and bronze in sculpture, and oils in painting.

certo will not nullify the other outstanding pianists' (Richter and Gilels, for example) interpretation of this same Concerto. The inevitability of musical performance and the need for many different performances are linked through the sound material of musical art with this art's specific essence which has determined the selection and the manner of processing the material, and which is responsible for the specific character of music's social impact. The purpose and the possibilities of music are also revealed in its interpretation, in the correlation of composer-performer-listener, and after that in the correlation of all three with the social environment.

In many respects, the attitude of the performer to the composition is akin to the attitude of the listener, provided, of course, that both are interested and not indifferent. In his imagination, the listener becomes a secret partner of the performer, or one of the interpreters of the main melody. Whether consciously or unconsciously, distinctly or indistinctly, the listener, as a general rule, intones the music he hears, and reproduces the flow of the melody, the peculiarities of the rhythm and the time. This inner intonating—for all its desired accuracy—does not have to correspond exactly to the sounds pouring from the stage of a concert hall or an opera house. Each listener, just as each performer, finds his own, personal variant, *within reason*, of course. The distinctions between these variants are infinitesimal, but in art such slight differences and barely noticeable shadings are very important. They are the more interesting in the creative sense, the more musical is the listener and the more he is of a potential performer, or even perhaps a potential composer. The performer and the listener walk together along the road paved for them by the composer;

their paths now run together, now part a little, but they never overstep the bounds of the common road they have chosen, unrolling before them in the development of the composition, in the "stream" of music. What happens then is a mergence of the listener with the performer, and of the performer with the composer, and all of them become members of a ramified creative *ensemble*, and for it to be an "ensemble" in the full meaning of the word the essential condition is for everyone to reveal his own, unique artistic *individuality*.

When examining the composer-performer-listener association, we must not look upon the musical work as the starting-point. A musical work itself is the result of life's various and many influences on the composer who takes his material from people, from society, and after digesting, transforming and enriching it, gives it back to people, to society. Consequently, the work of a composer (or any artist) is not the starting-point but the middle of the curve (the culmination, as far as creativity is concerned), a sort of "transformer" in this aesthetic curve which begins and ends in the same midst of social reality. The analysis of the mergence of listener with performer, and performer with composer is thereby rendered more accurate and at the same time more complicated.

The mergence of the artist's inner world with reality and, in particular, with the inner world of his hero, who is close to him in spirit, is expressed more fully, consistently and convincingly in music than it is in any other form of art.

Music recreates the inner world of the hero (an individual, or the people) in the process of development, freeing this world from its visible corporeal shell, from many outward characteristics

and relatively circumstantial particulars which very often overshadow the essence of this hero and hinder the mutual understanding of people. In real life, a beautiful inner world may be found in a far from beautiful, and even an ugly person. This incongruity, important for painting, sculpture, the stage, the screen and literature, does not exist for music. The hero whose inner world is ideal appears in music as an ideal hero. The poetic words "direct from heart to heart" convey perfectly the ingenuousness with which music embodies the inner world of man and, interpreting it in aesthetically perfect forms, makes an offering of it to people.

The listener's creative participation is at its most active when he is hearing monumental, dramaturgically developed compositions. He goes through the same emotional experience as the "hero" of the music, identifying his own Ego with this person.

What kind of heroes did music give us more of in the course of its history, and what ideals does it carry and implant in our minds?

All music whose artistic worth is indisputable originated in close connection with the finest progressive ideals, truly humane in character. The aim of this music, reflecting with aesthetic truthfulness the best and the noblest in people, was to develop humaneness in men and inwardly prepare them for the given period of history, inasmuch as this was possible on the difficult ascent up the steps of historical development.

During practically the whole of its existence music, as a rule, knew only positive characters whose inner world merged naturally with the inner world of the composer, whether a professional musician or a folk bard (one of those nameless authors of real gems). Negative characters, per-

sonifying evil, were introduced into music as the range of its expressive means grew in variety and breadth. One of these expressive means was grotesquerie. It was used, for instance, to show the emotional state of a man who believes in good, resists evil, is appalled by it, and denounces it, naming its worth with a full measure of bitter sarcasm. (Let us recall the finale of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* where the artist's love appears in the guise of a vulgar witch, a transformation which was rendered through a complete change of the melodious image-theme: from the sublimely poetic to the grotesquely vulgar.)

Exceptionally impressive images of evil were created by Sergei Prokofiev (the Teutonic Knights in his "Alexander Nevsky" Cantata) and by Dmitri Shostakovich in the invasion episode in his Seventh Symphony. Many similar examples may be found in 19th-century and particularly 20th-century music.

Still, the more significant images in music remain those which portray the inner world of people who assert "the human in men", and stand for dignity in sorrow or in joy. It is symptomatic that the satirically-grotesque genre did not develop so much in music as it did in painting and literature, and that there are hardly any musical works of any large significance filled exclusively with images of evil, even though denunciation of evil is so much in character with genuine art and is expressed so convincingly in the attitude of authors and painters.

The representation of evil (even if accusingly) does not make the main purpose or the main pathos of music, as far as this can be judged from the results of millenniums and also from its present state. Musical expressionism did give the right of way to the representation of evil, and, what is

more, evil which rules over man (which does not by any manner of means make Schönberg, Berg or Webern apologists of evil in their motives or seekings) and this led to fatal changes in the whole pattern of images and expressive means: music reached a limit beyond which it turned into something quite different, something which in the West assumed the title of avant-garde art quite unlawfully, since there is nothing advanced in this disintegration of musical art.

Vulgar ersatz-music which is losing the precious features of genuine art is based on the renunciation of ethical values and a striving to bring music closer to physiological primitivism.

It turns out that deviating from the main road of human culture, and consequently dispensing with the aesthetic truthfulness of portrayal and the promotion of humane ideals, inevitably leads to the destruction of musical art. This applies to art in general, but especially so to music: for all its enormous and "durable" resources for asserting humane ideals, it loses them the moment an attempt is made to switch it into another, an antagonistic sphere. Music is more fragile than any other form of art, it breaks up into fragments and each of them is given the title of some "ism" which is the fad of the moment. However that may be, it is not a fate shared by all music.

The embodiment of lofty humanist ideals in musical images is attained by disclosing the inner world of those people or individuals who lead the struggle for mankind's progress. With their deeds and social endeavour, whereby the transition to a new period of history is accomplished, they assert the humanist ideal of our epoch. Soviet music is so highly acclaimed precisely because it represents the inner world of these modern heroes and the ideal they are struggling for.

This brings us to the question of those socio-historical conditions which were responsible for the vigorous development of musical art in the course of the last few centuries.

The most important of these conditions was that music became more and more an art of the people and for the people.*

The downfall of feudalism, the progressive role played by the Renaissance and then the launching of the national-liberation revolutionary movement, enhanced the significance of the masses and this in its turn had a telling effect on the upsurge in musical art. Let us remember how Beethoven's music was influenced by the French Revolution.

The role of the masses, who are travelling a historical road guided by the light of Marxism-Leninism, has grown immeasurably. It is to this that music owes the gains it is scoring today, and in this lies the earnest of its future successes.

The formative process of nations, which also played a prominent part in the vigorous development of music in the last few centuries, was closely allied to the enhancement of the historical role of the masses and the downfall of feudalism. The history of culture shows that this process was accompanied everywhere by an upsurge in musical creativity, notably in Russia, Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Norway. With the appearance of socialist nations and the em-

* It must be borne in mind that this is an aesthetic and not simply a socially-ideological category. The character of music, more than that of the other arts, is in great measure determined by how this category is interpreted.

One of its many aspects is the embodiment of progressive ideals which unite millions of people. None of the arts are capable of doing this as effectively and emotionally as music.

barkation of more and more new states on the road of progressive modern culture, the development of national schools of music became more intensive and important. It was not so very long ago that many of the nationalities peopling the Soviet Union, to say nothing of the numerous other nations elsewhere in the world, had no idea how to read or write music; they did not know how to use such powerful means as polyphony, and were unfamiliar with the monumental genres—opera, symphony, etc. We ourselves witnessed many national schools of music (for example, Armenian and Azerbaijan) not only mastering all the expressive means and forms of modern music, but actually coming to the forefront of world culture.

The ability of music to unite people and artistically reflect this unity was evinced most strongly in conditions of the rapid development of the socialist nations' musical cultures. The work of the best composers of our multinational country proves this assertion.

All the nations inhabiting our country form one nation—the Soviet people. The finest of the national features, the most progressive, become international. In the matter of achieving international solidarity, the uniting properties of music manifest themselves with redoubled force, for it is an art that knows no language barriers, it picks up and records those psychological characteristics which are common to all the nations comprising the Soviet people. Thus, the progressive and the national becomes international, and makes one of the sources feeding musical art and giving a spurt to its development.

The widening cultural interests of nations and, needless to say, of individuals were largely responsible for the development and character of

music in the last centuries. Emotions became even more profound and complex, the meaning of personality gained greater importance, the lyrical quality—in the broadest sense of the word—was intensified, and more significance came to be attached to creative imagination. For a number of reasons, tomorrow's musical accomplishments will be much greater than today's. The main and decisive factor will be the attainment of communism, under which the individual will receive an all-round, harmonious development. It is the privilege and the duty of music to take part in solving this historical task by cultivating humaneness in men.

The generalised, ethically exalted idiom of progressive modern music will be understood by all the world for it glorifies Peace, Labour, Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood and Happiness of all the nations.

CREATIVE FREEDOM AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Creative freedom has been receiving ever-increasing attention in bourgeois literature. Unfortunately, any serious discussion of the question is hindered by the anti-communist hysteria that has spread among certain sections of the intelligentsia in capitalist countries over the last few years. It is largely a matter of people who are ill-informed of the actual state of affairs in the Soviet Union being manipulated by those who have made a profession of anti-communist propaganda. The main thesis of the latter is that communism and creative freedom are incompatible. The champions of the "free" world do their utmost to prove that only in capitalist society does the creative subject find true freedom for self-expression, and that in socialist society everything depends on "directives from above" and there is thus no creative freedom. Yet these critics somehow manage to avoid the decisive issue, and that is how to explain the tremendous successes the Soviet Union has achieved over the last fifty years in the field of culture. The fact is that Soviet culture has long since earned world recognition and is continuing to develop at a pace unequalled by any capitalist country. It should also be borne in mind that all the outstanding achievements of Soviet art are due to a *positive* attitude to the socialist system, whereas the best works of art in the capitalist world have always been critical of "the establishment" at grass roots level. Capitalism did play a positive role in the development of art in its time, but then, by making a salable commodity of every-

thing, it dragged the artist into the whirlpool of market relations with all the consequences it entails. The result was the establishment of the cruellest dictatorship creative artists had ever known—the dictatorship of capital. In his *Illusions Perdues* Balzac presents a staggering picture of the transformation of artistic values into a salable commodity and the tragedy of the artist who has fallen victim to bourgeois “freedom”, freedom to sell oneself.

On the surface free competition seems to ensure “equal opportunities” for all, and freedom to do exactly as one likes, so that there is always the illusion of absolute creative freedom. However, capitalist reality destroys such illusions as quickly as it creates them. The honest artist in the “free world” is perfectly well aware of the real value of the claim that creative freedom exists in bourgeois society. If he really does manage to attain such freedom it is largely thanks to the support of the powerful anti-capitalist forces in his society.

It is the presence of this anti-bourgeois movement in capitalist society which to some extent limits the power of capital over creative freedom. Just how much it is limited depends on the strength and range of the workers’ liberation movement. As Lenin put it: “The freedom of the bourgeois writer, artist or actress is simply masked (or hypocritically masked) dependence on the money-bag, on corruption, on prostitution.”* The big financial magnates control the press, publishing, the film industry and the theatres and are thus able to guide the development of art. They tend to encourage anything that distracts the masses from social problems and participation in

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 48.

the struggle in defence of their interests. Art which fulfils this requirement is allowed to develop freely. When it comes to progressive artists, on the other hand, the bourgeoisie does everything in its power to hinder direct contact between them and the public. There have even been cases of the powers-that-be taking legal action against them, and this not only in countries like Spain, Greece or Mexico, but in those like the U.S.A., which are considered "model" bourgeois democracies.

The financial magnates are gradually being forced to loosen their grip on the development of art. Fine democratic, humanist art has arisen in capitalist countries in connection with the powerful liberation movement of the working masses, and is growing and spreading all the time. Artistic development in the capitalist countries is being further revolutionised by the existence of the socialist world.

The problem of creative freedom is generally distorted in bourgeois literature, due to abstract, non-historical approach. The social conditions in which the author, actor or artist carries on his creative activity are usually overlooked, whereas in fact the essential point is not whether a given creative subject is formally free or not, but the ideals he subscribes to in his work. The artist, like any other individual, cannot disengage himself from the particular conditions in which he lives and acts. As Lenin wrote "one cannot live in society and be free from society".* The artist perceives this dependence on society in his own particular way and it affects the motives behind his activity. This leaves him quite a lot of room for choice. Exalted social ideals or such petty,

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 48.

egoistic considerations as self-interest and self-seeking can equally well serve as motives of creative activity. Formally, or subjectively, the artist may feel he is creating freely in either case. In fact, however, he is only free if his activity is motivated by a deep awareness of the laws and trends of historical development, and if what he creates serves the progressive forces in society. The artist whose incentive is self-interest or self-seeking is the slave of his petty, base motives. The bourgeoisie takes advantage of this to keep artists "enslaved", doing everything in its power to corrupt the artistic intelligentsia.

Only in the conditions of socialist society can artists at last enjoy unlimited creative freedom. Freed from the power of money, careerism and petty-bourgeois anarchism, they are able to draw inspiration from serving the people and their interests, which is indeed what nearly all the great artists of the past strove in vain to do.

Thus, the problem of creative freedom is not so much psychological as socio-historical, and it can only be correctly resolved by treating it as such. Indeed, this is how Marxism solves it. Marxism does not contrast freedom and social duty. The freedom of art, as Lenin pointed out, lies in the fact that art serves "not some satiated heroine, not the bored 'upper ten thousand' suffering from fatty degeneration, but the millions and tens of millions of working people—the flower of the country, its strength and its future."* Real creative freedom arises from a deep link with the life of the people and voluntary service to the cause of social progress. With the literature of socialist society in view Lenin wrote: "It will be a free literature, enriching the last word in the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 48-49.

revolutionary thought of mankind with the experience and living work of the socialist proletariat, bringing about permanent interaction between the experience of the past (scientific socialism, the completion of the development of socialism from its primitive, utopian forms) and the experience of the present (the present struggle of the worker comrades).”*

Real, as opposed to illusory, creative freedom is possible only in a society free from exploitation, social injustice, national oppression, and the power of blind economic forces. It was the October Revolution which brought creative artists this freedom. In a conversation with Clara Zetkin, Lenin remarked that prior to the Revolution the development of art had depended on fashion and the caprices of the tsarist court, and on the tastes and whims of the artistocracy and the bourgeoisie. “Our Revolution freed artists from the yoke of these extremely prosaic conditions. It turned the state into their defender and client providing them with orders. Every artist, and everyone who considers himself such, has the right to create freely, to follow his ideal regardless of everything.”**

Lenin held that it was not enough to free artists, writers and actors from crippling censorship, bourgeois mercantile relations, and political blackmail and oppression. They must also be freed from anarcho-individualist influences, since anarchism is bourgeois values and slavery turned inside out. The way to freedom lay via socialist revolution and the radical transformation of social relations.

We have already noted that creative freedom, as correctly understood, is perfectly compatible with the principle of service to the people, of the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 49.

** Clara Zetkin, *My Recollections of Lenin*, M., 1956, p. 18.

·artist's moral responsibility. Any activity of any member of society, including the artist, has a politico-moral aspect which cannot be ignored. All kinds of intellectual and purposeful activity directly or indirectly addressed to other people call forth a response and judgement. The painter, writer, actor, or composer, all give some kind of information about the world, trying to form and express a politico-moral and aesthetic judgement of certain aspects of reality in the light of certain social ideals. The creative artist expresses his concept of reality through the works he produces, and helps others form an ideological and aesthetic attitude to it. In other words, the artist gives people their bearings in the world and, directly or indirectly as the case may be, influences the way they behave. Can society as a whole, or certain classes or social groups possibly adopt a neutral politico-moral and aesthetic standpoint with regard to such activity? Can society remain indifferent to the artist who misleads people, instilling bad ideas and behaviour in them? Can the artist ignore society's reaction to his works? Surely, one must conclude that the artist has a responsibility towards society, or a particular class or social group. It may seem at first sight that creative activity belongs purely to the realm of the imagination, that what the artist creates is in no way related to reality, and that it is, therefore, wrong to make any politico-moral demands on the artist. This view of art prevailed in the past and indeed can still be met with now. Naturally, there is a difference between scientific concept and artistic image just as scientific and artistic activity are different, although in both cases perception and appraisal of the objective world are involved. Yet, allowing for the specific nature of artistic activity and its product the fact remains that the

artist bears politico-moral responsibility no less than the scientist, the politician, etc. Great writers, artists and composers have invariably been men of strong moral fibre and possessed of a keen sense of moral responsibility. Suffice it to mention Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, Goethe, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoi and Gorky. What is more, wherever a conflict arose between aesthetic and ethic principles great artists invariably resolved the issue in favour of the latter. Some bourgeois theoreticians are deliberately trying to paralyse this feeling of moral responsibility. "Rough stuff" has unfortunately become extremely common in bourgeois art today as a result of irresponsible theories and the corruption of artists with no moral fibre.

There is thus an organic link between the question of the artist's moral responsibility and creative freedom. This is only natural, for responsibility implies the freedom of the individual on whom it is laid. If a man behaved like an automaton, that is, if all his actions depended entirely on outside circumstances, then it would be quite ridiculous to make him responsible for his actions and their consequences. It is equally true that real creative freedom is impossible unless the artist is fully aware of his moral responsibility for what he does. Irresponsible actions are the actions not of a free man but of a slave, and what is more of the worst kind of slave, one who imagines he is free.

In Soviet society from the very earliest days of people's rule great attention was paid to the moral education of the artist. We have every right to be proud of our success in producing a new type of artist with a highly developed sense of moral responsibility.

WORLD OUTLOOK AND ARTISTIC ORIGINALITY

Art is created by people possessing talent. It is an axiom that talent can be developed but not acquired, that people are born either with it or without it.

In order to be truly creative in the sphere of art, however, one must have more than native talent alone. A great deal depends on the ideological position of the artist, which directs his imagination and thinking. The history of art has shown that genuinely important works are created by people who are not only talented but also have a progressive world outlook; exceptions to this rule simply go to prove it.

In this day and age the connection between the artist's world outlook and his work is becoming ever closer and more organic, due primarily to the increasing role which the intellectual factor has come to play in art. The whole history of art, and of Soviet art in particular, is the history of the formation and development of *artistic thought*. It is not surprising, therefore, that the best Soviet writers, producers and artists are striving to create an image of modern man which would reflect not only his feelings and actions, but his questing mind. It is precisely this which characterises the present development of art.

It is no exaggeration to say that despite the capriciousness of aesthetic taste and the kaleidoscopic replacement of one school by another in the art of the 20th century, the novels, films and paintings which are really firm favourites with the public at large are those which give food for

thought. Pushkin's statement that a writer must have thoughts, thoughts and thoughts is truer now than ever before.

This does not mean, of course, that art should merge with philosophy and lose its intense emotional content, as Hegel prophesied it would. It means rather that art is striving to plunge more deeply into life and use all the means at its disposal to shape the thoughts and feelings of the vast mass of the people. Naturally, the artist of today more than ever before is becoming a thinker and philosopher, ideally combining in himself a subtle, emotional response to the "simplest" facts of everyday life with the ability to make a profound scientific analysis of the present day.

This is all perfectly logical, bearing in mind that present-day society has become so complicated, as well as the main subject of artistic knowledge—man himself. It is common knowledge that rapid social and technological progress witnesses an equally rapid spiritual and moral uplift in the individual if he has joined in this movement and actively promotes it. So it is not surprising that the man, who has been shaped by such complex conditions, should be such a hard nut for the artist to crack. To understand him and depict his inner world is a most difficult task, even for a highly gifted writer. This difficulty was even recognised by the classical writers, including, for example, Saltykov-Shchedrin who wrote: "The inner resources of a negative person are as poor as those of the new man are rich, and, consequently, the task of studying the former is as easy as a study of the latter is difficult. . . . An idle person can be explained with the help of talent alone, but the job of explaining a man of action requires a certain amount of training in

addition to talent.”* This is an excellent definition of the new tasks facing the modern writer. Aesthetic analysis of reality is becoming more complex year in and year out, as more and more is demanded of it.

Philosophy and perception of the world by the artist are assuming increasing importance in creative activity. The artist who is indifferent to philosophy may well prove to be incapable of making a sufficiently profound analysis of the everyday world. Starved of ideas his imagination will soon dry up.

*

What do we understand by “world outlook”? We see it as a *whole complex of basic socio-political, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic principles and attitudes*. In analysing the question of world outlook and creative activity one should never “extract” any one of these aspects metaphysically, or examine it in isolation from the rest. This is particularly important if one is attempting an accurate, *all-round* assessment of this or that writer. If one were to consider, for example, Lev Tolstoi from a purely socio-political point of view, his *political* philosophy contains much that is negative, even retrogressive. The same applies to Dostoyevsky to an even greater extent. But if one evaluates Dostoyevsky’s and Tolstoi’s theoretical conceptions in relation to their work, one sees (as Lenin pointed out in his articles on Tolstoi) that, taken as a whole, both these great writers were *progressive* artists with a progressive, humanist outlook on life, in spite of

* M. Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin on *Literature and Art*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1953, p. 183.

certain weaknesses explicable in terms of the age in which they lived.

Methodologically, a scientific analysis of world outlook and art must proceed from the objective unity of outlook and work in the full knowledge that as a rule this unity is of a complex, dialectical nature.

Certain discrepancies and even contradictions may and do arise within this world outlook between the various elements that go to make it up. In other words, the artist's attitude towards life may be characterised by harmony or discord. Such discord is detrimental to the work of even the greatest master, condemning him to serious errors of judgement which may be corrected but not entirely eliminated by his creative intuition.

It is appropriate to mention at this point that striving for an integrated world outlook lay at the very foundation of Russian classical traditions in literature and the arts. It characterises the works of Tolstoi, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Gorky, Serov, Vrubel, Skryabin and Chaliapin, although not all of these were successful in their endeavours.

We cannot, therefore, agree with the views of certain foreign aestheticians on the nature of creative thought and the role of the artist. It is difficult, for example, to accept the view that the most important feature of modern heuristic activity is the ideologically neutral position of the author, a cacophony of views and principles which results in the "unfinished state" (*non finita*) of a work of art. What is more, certain foreign aestheticians in working out the theoretical bases of the conception of *non finita* try to justify their position by references to the classical art of the past, including that of Asia and Africa. At the World Congress on Aesthetics held in Amsterdam

in August 1964, a great deal was said (particularly in the reports of the West German aesthetician Heinrich Lutzeller, "Unfinishedness in the Art of Eastern Asia" and the Greek aesthetician P. Michelis, "The Transient in Art") to the effect that the historical roots of this concept are to be found in ancient classical art, Japanese poetry, traditional Chinese painting, the works of Schubert, Michelangelo, Rodin, etc.

It is, of course, true that some classical works are unfinished. In some cases the artist did not succeed, for various reasons, in "finishing" his creative search for an entirely satisfactory solution of his problems. But all of them strove without exception for the fullest possible embodiment of their aesthetic ideals (an excellent illustration of this, as the well-known Soviet critic Victor Shklovsky has already pointed out,* is Dostoyevsky, a writer tormented by doubts and misgivings). One would have to handle the facts very loosely indeed to ascribe the modernist theory of "unfinishedness" to the classics.

But this theory is a negative one not only because its advocates give a distorted picture of the historical development of world art. Its chief defect lies in the fact that it sanctions and encourages the artist in modern bourgeois society to renounce the objective study of reality: the incomprehensibility of aesthetic works is acclaimed as the height of artistic achievement. The author does not complete his analysis of the world nor is required to do so as a matter of principle.

These theoreticians now attempt to persuade the artist that he should work for himself alone, contenting himself with a so-called "personal",

* V. Shklovsky, *For and Against. Notes on Dostoyevsky*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1957.

entirely subjective idea which is the highest degree of indetermination.

A theoretician of this kind is portrayed in Fellini's truly philosophical film "8½". He follows the hero of the film, Guido Anselmi, like an evil spirit whispering that confusion and lack of faith, embarrassed thoughts and feelings are precisely what characterises 20th-century man. Only the spiritual plebs, the *hoi polloi* are still able to find something to believe in and strive for. If he wants to be abreast of his age the true artist and intellectual cannot and should not create a work that is integrated and complete.

Explaining why he had portrayed this type of intellectual, Fellini wrote that this character represented a grave threat to Guido because he kills his ingeniousness. Each time Guido wants to be reborn this man tells him that there is no point in it. It is obvious that if he wants to live Guido will have to get rid of this monster.* Guido mentally hangs his false friend in the film.

Many leading artists in the West are coming to realise that it is better to get rid of a "monster"—the philosophy which is poisoning them with its intellectual nihilism, as if disrupting their world outlook.

*

"Disruption" in artistic thinking is, without a doubt, not so much the invention of this or that group of intellectuals as the spontaneous reflection of the collisions and antagonisms in "disrupted" reality. But there is always a choice of path both in life and art. It is possible to simply submit to life's complexities or even exalt com-

* F. Fellini's interview with the film critic Gideon Bachman, *Sight and Sound*, Spring, 1964, p. 83.

plexity for its own sake. Or one can try to overcome these contradictions and find a way to complete mastery of reality, which is the alternative favoured by all Marxist and progressive aestheticians and artists.

Using examples from modern progressive art, we should like to contrast this "disruption" of thinking which is, unfortunately, typical of many people in the arts today, with Pushkin's complex, but dynamic harmony. This harmony is to be found in the organic cohesion and mutual penetration of political, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic views. Their dialectic unity exists in the best works of the most talented exponents of socialist realism, such as Sholokhov, Leonov, Mayakovsky, Tvardovsky, Deineka, Plastov, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Eisenstein, Dovzhenko and others.

Sergei Eisenstein's film "*The Battleship Potyomkin*" is still considered to be one of the greatest films in the history of the cinema. Its aesthetic importance is conditioned to a large extent by its ideological and artistic integrity. This epic, many-sided work gives the impression of having been made all at one go. Everything about the film is in the right proportions; all the thoughts, ideas, emotions and images are organically fused together. It is impossible to separate the "political" effect of the film from its artistic effect, because the aesthetic structure is such that no single brick can be removed from it. Explaining the structural integrity of the film, Eisenstein wrote: "A work can become an integral whole and attain the highest form of integrity and effect, only when its content and idea are totally fused with the thoughts, feelings and very existence of its creator."^{*}

^{*} Sergei Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1964, p. 71.

This fusion of the "creator's existence" with the content of his work is possible only in cases when all the component parts of the artist's spiritual world are "ground in" to one another.

This presupposes rather than excludes the active participation of the author in making the structure of his work, a conscious attitude towards his work and a conscious striving for the "cohesion" of philosophical, ethic and other views.

* * *

The problem of world outlook in art cannot be reduced to the internal harmony of the artist's spiritual world. It is also the question of how the artist's world outlook is reflected in his individual endeavours. That all Soviet writers, directors, script writers, painters and composers share the same scientific Marxist-Leninist world outlook is well known. More often than not the answers given to this second question are vague or oversimplified. They are frequently limited to the statement that the author's originality shows itself only in his selection of subject, genre and formal devices.

There can be no doubt that the artist's "self" is felt in his choice of subject and his predilection for this or that genre, form or emotion; but does his world outlook really find direct expression in all these preferences?

Such an understanding of the problem inevitably restricts the importance of the artist's personality and limits his role as a thinker. It was Chekhov who wrote that "the originality of the author is to be found not only in his style, but also in his manner of thinking, his convictions and so on. . . ."^{*}

* A. P. Chekhov, *Complete Essays and Letters*, Vol. 13, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1948, pp. 285-86.

The concept of the artistic personality is a complicated and many-sided one. But the central factor that determines true originality of any person, be he a writer or not, is his manner of thinking. This in its turn is determined by his world outlook which, however, takes on a limitless variety of forms of expression as it is processed in the individual consciousness.

Reality in all its many aspects and qualities forces the artist to concentrate on certain specific questions and problems of everyday life, and select his own angle of viewing the world. Marx noted that "one and the same object is processed differently by different people, and its various aspects are turned into equally various spiritual characters. . . ."^{*}

Since art is basically the study of man, this "spiritual character" finds expression above all in individual understanding, in the attention, sympathy or antipathy paid to these particular aspects, properties and qualities of surrounding reality, and in the conscious or unconscious conception of the world.

This artist's conception is a direct reflection of world outlook in the original structure of thought and feelings of this or that author. It is the basis of all the stylistic differences between artists with the same world outlook and method.

Thus creative originality is expressed not so much in the choice of formal devices (which is immediately obvious when one studies the style of outstanding artists) as in the ability to use and create these devices, to intrude actively into life and discover there aspects, situations and characters which have escaped the attention of others.

^{*} K. Marx and F. Engels, *Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 1, p. 7.

The artist's conception of the world cannot, of course, be identified with scientific hypothesis, that is, with a strictly formulated logical system. It is more dynamic and subjective by virtue of its special aesthetic method of mastering reality. But this does not shake the main thesis: works of art by all the great masters have a profound and original thought, which underpins the author's originality. Hegel's words come to mind, namely, that originality in art is nothing freakish, no mere affectation on the lines of "trying to be different from the rest", but independent artistic thinking, which reveals the special, unique content of all life's phenomena.

Choosing his position in art enables the artist to concentrate and express that which is general and natural through that which is partial and accidental and to form his "spiritual character".

Is there a common link between such different Soviet producers as Dovzhenko and Chukhrai? Undoubtedly. Both assert the principles of active, heroic humanism and advocate communist ideals. But Chukhrai, in the film "Ballad of a Soldier", concentrates on the heroic as revealed in the ordinary and specific; the strict, controlled poetics of the film are geared to this. The death of the hero, Alyosha Skvortsov, gives expression to the originality of this director's artistic thought. The latter emphasises the complex ways of asserting humanism—victory is achieved at the price of the death of those who deserve to live and be happy.

Dovzhenko's films show a different conception of the heroic. His work is characterised by a romantically heightened conception of the individual. He is attracted by the spiritual and emotional resources of man, and the heroes of his films always stand out with their expansive, gen-

erous natures, which links them with the legendary figures of folk literature. An example of this is Ivan Orlyuk ("The Tale of the Ardent Years") who is a symbol of the unconquered nation. Orlyuk cannot perish from the most fatal wounds, just like the nation whose immortality the director is asserting cannot perish. This explains the director's romantically heightened poetic style, his elevated pathos and bold conventionality.

The strength of any really important work of art lies in the genuine originality of its author's creative thought. This applies to the best works of Soviet art. A single world outlook is a unity in variety, a union of extremely varied, original artists, who, each in their own way, are serving the ideals of humanism.

ART AND THE NATIONAL ARTISTIC TRADITION

Every work of art of world standing has a strong national flavour. Whether in Botticelli's "Spring", Andrei Rublyov's icon painting, Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, Byron's *Childe Harold* or in the music of Rakhmaninov, Bartók and Prokofiev we keenly feel the period and environment which gave birth to them.

Here we are dealing with the dialectical relationship between the general and the specific, the universal and national.

The dialectical unity of universal and national phenomena is apparent in *every* aspect of man's socio-economic and spiritual evolution. Explicit in historical materialism, the laws of historical development which are common to all nations manifest themselves in various forms of national advancement, each form being the structure through which the universal laws of social development come to light.

The emergence and gradual social and economic development of a human community—during which a common tongue, territory, statehood and a number of mental features are established—are wholly reflected in national individuality which becomes more and more stable as time goes by.

Having a relatively stable but contradictory (in class society) national community, the culture and art of that community are an objective reflection of the concrete historical process. Consequently, as culture and art undergo changes in

content corresponding to successive stages in the development of society, they are bound to assume a relatively independent national form.

When private ownership of the means of production arises, class division is an inherent necessity for the very existence of the national community. But this class-divided national community cannot be considered otherwise than as part and parcel of contradictory national advancement; even the bitterest class struggle not only divides what is national and universal but creates the opportunities for its revolutionary transformation.

We gain our spiritual grasp of the real world through perception of the development of class antagonisms. Thus, antagonistic contradictions and the class nature of various points of view are bound to leave their mark on the whole sphere of social consciousness. It is only with the victory of a socialist revolution that national culture, freed from class antagonisms, attains social homogeneity and genuine unity.

It would be wrong, however, to ignore the epistemological nature of any really positive spiritual activity, viewing culture merely as an expression of certain class biases. Lenin criticised vulgar-sociological views as a flagrant debasement of dialectical materialism and a caricature of Marxism. While defending the cultural heritage, he emphasised the need to reappraise and assimilate the spiritual values mankind had created.

If the role of the intelligentsia is to widen and deepen the objective truth of human knowledge, that kind of spiritual activity must inevitably add new positive elements to the national culture. Creative art, as an integral part of spiritual activity, is the bearer of a nation's cultural continuity

if individual works are considered of permanent artistic value.

Is national individuality a fruitful goal for the professional artist? There is a wide consensus of opinion that this attitude to one's work automatically entails the introduction of an "ethnographical" element, which at best can only result in deliberate stylisation. This position is diametrically opposed to the evolution of art and the practice of great contemporary artists.

A national artistic tradition only exists as a process and not as a fossilised, circumscribed collection of styles, individual idioms and masterpieces of anonymous folk art.

To go out of one's way to contrast professional creativity with folk art is not only false and conceited but does not correspond to the objective reality of the artistic process. Professional creativity is achieved through perfecting and differentiating all fields of knowledge in folk art proper and it cannot be removed from this ancient and stable foundation.

In this connection one cannot ignore the continuity of human knowledge which is the result of the transference of artistic experience and various types and genres of art from one country to another, where favourable social, economic and spiritual conditions have come into play for them to be independently cultivated. However, the existence of this continuity does not mean that strictly folk elements should ever be forsaken.

Folk art may be drawn on in the treatment of subjects or their composite elements or as a source of musical themes and melodies to be developed, etc. But professional art plays the leading role in this process by using anonymous folk elements for its initial impulses. The most im-

portant thing, however, is for the artist to really penetrate the pattern and spirit of folk art and give an individual, inimitable reflection of it through the prism of his own genius. This is the way for all artists in their work with purely national material, including those professionals who do not recourse to direct borrowing from popular sources.

Folk music is fundamental to professional composition. Rakhmaninov wrote: "The countries which have a wealth of folk songs are also the ones where great music develops. . . . I have a low opinion of people who reject harmony and melody and plunge into an orgy of noise and dissonances, which are an end in themselves. . . . They have become renegades, people without a homeland hoping to become international. How mistaken they are. . . ."^{*}

Russian composers have organically fused the artistic forms and means of expression of various national schools of music with Russian folk music, and world music has been greatly enriched by the numerous outstanding products of this synthesis. The Russian heritage of folk songs viewed and acknowledged as a cultural process going back many centuries shows many layers of development each with its own unique world of imagery and feeling, its wide spectrum of melodies and intonation, countless harmonies and polyphonic combinations. That is why no talented Russian composer need ever repeat his precursors or contemporaries in his interpretation of folk music elements.

The original folk melodies which have held their own for hundreds and thousands of years

^{*} S. V. Rakhmaninov, *Letters*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1955, pp. 556-57.

of music-making were still the source of all that is peculiarly Russian in the works of Glinka and Chaikovsky, Taneyev and Bortnyansky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Moussorgsky, Borodin, Lyadov, Kalinnikov and Glazunov, Rakhmaninov and Metner, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Sviridov—in all their “thinking in tones”.

However, an original national artistic tradition cannot be simply due to an anonymous folk source.

As professional art comes into being the individual creativity of a professional artist becomes the decisive factor in the development of national artistic culture, for it is the artist's genius, fantasy and inspiration which make possible multifarious generalisation of the work of the preceding generations and of their artistic experience, the experience of age-old folk art in its countless manifestations and aspects. At the same time the artist is making a qualitatively new contribution and adding to the wealth of the national heritage. The original style and individual manner of every one of the shining galaxy of professional artists make up a national artistic tradition, its glory and pride and its contribution to the treasure-house of world art. That is why everything possible must be done to encourage and develop artistic talent, for the appearance and creative work of national geniuses is a question not only of the full, free, creative and spiritual development of the personality but also of a modern nation's artistic present and future, its honour and dignity.

The formation of the artist's creative “ego” is a process which takes place in a national cultural medium already fully formed and is bound up with the creative assimilation of preceding traditions, achievements and artistic experience. The

creative personality cannot form and cannot exist outside this national artistic culture. Therefore the artist's idea of his homeland is part of his whole being; it merges with his creative individuality and his life in art. It is constantly being freshened and strengthened as it comes into play with real life in its infinite variety and reaffirms itself in concrete artistic ties with contemporary national life, culture and history.

Powerful, mature intellectual talent, artistic skill, a precise clear notion of national dignity, a will to perform one's duties as a citizen, a deep natural love for one's homeland, its people, history and culture are all decisive factors in the birth of a great national artist.

Professional creativity forms the national individuality of the art of future generations, brightly tinges every national artistic culture with originality and stamps it with the seal of free development.

Professional tradition is the rock on which the artist builds. Every artist who blazes his own original trail in the world of art adds to the variety of aesthetic discoveries in his own national art. At the same time his mind will always be alert to the art of his precursors to a greater or lesser extent depending on his own inclinations and the level of artistic development existing at the time his life as an artist begins.

It was just these processes which allowed the Russian school of music after Glinka to grow into a mighty oak-tree with each of its forks branching out and out again into a host of original artistic credos.

The socialist content of works by the brilliant Russian composers of the Soviet period—Prokofiev, Myaskovsky, Sviridov and Shostakovich—cannot be properly examined without some refe-

rence to their organic ties with the national heritage of the past. The logico-historical advancement of art, including music, is a relatively intrinsic process like cognising and "overcoming" dialectically what has just been cognised. Peculiar to art, although it always treats objective reality, are numerous mediated correlations between subjects, themes, imagery and expression technique, professional methods of processing artistic material, and, most important, the spiritual core of a work against a background of changed social reality.

Sometimes a modern artist is alleged to face a choice of either going in step with the time, being an innovator and joyfully creating something valuable for mankind, or of sticking in the mire of obsolete taste in a futile search for national originality.

The opposition of the modern evolution of expression techniques to the national individuality of art seems far-fetched, for without the struggle and unity of opposites there is no movement and no development. Deep down in the national artistic tradition, in which elements of strictly folk and professional art are indissolubly bound, quantitative changes are constantly amassing and eventually lead to qualitative leaps. Therefore innovation, regarded not as an absolute negation but as a dialectical solution, is an inevitable and intrinsically necessary condition for pouring new life into all broadly developed and isolated trends in national art.

It is a waste of time proposing ways of embodying national individuality in art. This can only come through content and not through the exterior, mechanical side of creation. And the national artistic tradition comprises more than merely the tiresome rewardless job of harping

on old themes and methods. It ought to free the artist, not fetter him.

The artist is always a child of his time. So in order to give wings to his really positive work as an artist, he should make a careful study of the latest works in his field of art and give himself a general picture of what is going on in other branches of art, following up the latest views on changing the ways in which ideas are given artistic expression. Surely the onward march of art, its forms and means of expression, i.e., the language of art, has an objective character and is independent of the will and desires of people; every artist finds society, art and the principles of the treatment of artistic material at a certain stage in their logico-artistic development, a stage which the social practice and artistic experience of the preceding generations have acquired.

Only if the artist realises the objective inevitability of the artistic process while he is working, and if he is always willing to improve his technical mastery will he achieve individuality and unique form and content which singles him out from other artists, i.e., the real freedom to create.

Prokofiev is one of the composers who set in motion these cardinal changes in the whole system of expressive means in European music which took place in our century. At the same time he is a great Soviet-Russian composer not simply because he depicted his contemporary Soviet epoch and reflected the feelings of his countrymen and contemporaries. In such major works as his Seventh Symphony, Second and Third Piano Concertos, the opera *War and Peace*, the Cantata "Alexander Nevsky", the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Sonatas for Piano and the ballets *The Tale of the Jester Who Outjested Seven Jesters*, *Cinderella* and *Romeo and Juliet*, all in the typ-

ical idiom of Prokofiev, the composer followed up a variety of motifs which all went into the intellectual content of his work and which he used for purely artistic purposes. Prokofiev took advantage of the pure technicalities of the Russian school, and the result was that he found as no one before him, whole areas untouched in the field of intonation and harmony peculiar to Russian professional and folk music.

Let it be understood that a fundamental change in life from which art takes its material is the factor which will ultimately give rise to innovations in art.

It is not by chance that innovation is organically inherent in the art of the great Soviet masters whose works reflected the upsurge of the working people in the October Socialist Revolution and the passionate, selfless fight for freedom from social oppression. Mayakovsky's poetry, Eisenstein's films and Deineka's painting are admirable examples of this.

The national individuality of art is inevitably bound up with the evolution of forms and language of artistic creativity and with the succession of literary, artistic and musical schools and trends.

The independent development of national art not only excludes but, on the contrary, presupposes mutual cultural exchange and influence between different nations.

The artificial cultivation of nationalistic self-conceit, exclusiveness and isolationism automatically lowers the aesthetic standards by which art is judged and is an obstacle to the aesthetic development of the artist, bringing a concomitant decline in professional art.

But increased contact and interchange of experience between nations does not impede the

progress of national art. As in all other spheres of human activity, "even when one nation progresses by borrowing from another, its progress is still national."*

If art is to master reality aesthetically and reflect the national historical process both directly and indirectly then the artist must never discard national artistic traditions. Only thus can the modern artist produce works of value to all mankind.

* V. G. Belinsky, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 10, Moscow, 1956, p. 29.

THE NATURE OF IMAGERY IN ART

Any discussion of imagery in art from the general aesthetic point of view must begin with an analysis of the various types and genres of artistic creation, and with an examination of divergent artistic methods, styles and trends. Imagery as a general concept requires careful definition, and the use of images in this or that work of art demands special study. This problem is an extremely complex one. Its basic components are, of course, reality which provides the material for artistic creation, the artist who reflects this material and, finally, the public who perceive art and for whom, in the last analysis, all true works of art are intended.

Each artistic image contains a model of the objectively existing world, and the subjective element added to it by both artist and public. It must be noted that imagery derives its subjective element from objective reality (which also includes the inner world of the artist) and, as such, is capable of study and definition. In our view the most elementary analysis of imagery must proceed from the point where life becomes art and the artist meets his public. From this it follows that the imagery of any given work materialises only when it is perceived and given an individual interpretation by people sufficiently prepared to look at, listen to or read it. Each and every one of us possesses the ability of not only perceiving, but also forming meaningful, graphic images in the imagination, and the image is always a graphic form of an emotional understanding of the

world. This was asserted as early as 1925 by the distinguished Soviet art critic, Professor A. V. Bakushinsky, justly considered one of the leading authorities on museums. In his view, the "aesthetic experience" in which man's own creative ability is awakened through contact with art, is a "repetition of the creative act".*

The psychological aspect which Professor Bakushinsky gave to the problem under discussion needs considerable amplification. Any strictly scientific analysis of the nature of imagery in art demands an investigation of the historico-sociological connection between the given work and the people appreciating it.

From an epistemological point of view, thinking in images is man's emotional reflection of his many-sided relationship with the world. It becomes artistic, in the true sense of the word, only when the partially associative and metaphorical reflection of reality in images has as its acknowledged aim the creation of works for other people.** Thus, every given work of art consists of artistic images embodying concrete content, and can be assessed only in the light of this content which has been given material form in images. It should be borne in mind that in art the content is not an abstract idea, but an idea which has become an image, or even a self-sufficient, but meaningful image which produces an emotional effect on us by means of its material indications.

* A. V. Bakushinsky, *Artistic Creation and Education*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1925; A. V. Bakushinsky, *Aesthetic Museum Excursions*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1919.

** Consciously or not, the artist always constructs, compiles and sharpens his work, giving a specific context to each image which arises in the creative process, even intuitively. He does this bearing in mind those who will perceive his creation, and also for his own artistic ends.

Let us assume that the statue of Venus de Milo is not simply the embodiment of ideal beauty and not simply a representation of a beautiful woman, but a combination of the two—the embodiment of the ideal in real form. However, as has already been mentioned, reality which has been poeticised and transformed by the artist may also form the content of art, even when no specific meaning is attached to it. This is illustrated by Vrubel's famous painting "Lilac". The clusters of lilac, some blurred and glistening in pale blues and violets against the dark green foliage and a strikingly blue sky, others resembling the facets of precious stones, and the hazy figure of a woman who seems to be rising from them like a beautiful melody, have no aim other than that of expressing the great beauty of these spring flowers.

The artistic image should not be understood as a simple graphic representation of this or that object or the expression of human feeling. Neither a diagram of the muscles in an anatomical atlas nor a tape recording of a crowd roaring at a football match can claim to belong to the aesthetic sphere of art. This subject is excellently discussed in the book *The Aesthetic and the Artistic* (Moscow, 1965) by Professor G. I. Pospelov, and we do not propose to repeat his argument here. One point, however, needs to be emphasised. The artistic reflection of the world through images does not mean stark reproduction of the object. It means an aesthetic and, consequently, direct or indirect emotional appreciation of the object. The image reproduces a reality which has been transformed and assessed by the artist. And the direct object of this reproduction may also be the very subject giving rise to the work of art in all its complex, many-sided relations to reality. The intellectual element in artistic imagery is the

artist's striving to express his relations with the world. This element penetrates the whole figurative plane of the work, side by side with the emotional and aesthetic expression. Imagery in art presupposes emotional, intellectual embodiment by the artist of the concrete or imaginary world in the light of an historically determined aesthetic ideal.

Aesthetic definitions of imagery usually relate it primarily to those spheres and forms of art in which people are shown something concrete, meaningful and capable of representation. The actual depicting of an object with an emotional assessment is fundamental to the pictorial, monumental and scenic arts. In literature the representation is not perceived with the eye, its characteristic features being reproduced in detail. The creative activity of the reader helps him to divine the fragment of life reproduced by the writer and imagine it visually. In the case of the representational arts we actually see the image and add something personal to it. We experience definite feelings and strive to understand them, thereby mastering and assessing that which we have seen. Reading a work of literature, we do not see the image, but create it for ourselves, immersing ourselves in emotional reaction to and reliving of that which is being described. But what is reliving, if it is not putting oneself in the position of the characters in the book or of its author. The feeling experienced by the reader is capable of arousing many associations. The process of perceiving any form of art is usually similar to the normal perception of reality, although there are cases, which can be explained in psychological terms, where this process may lead to a heightened perception.

A building—"stone chronicle", a theatrical

spectacle, an artist's canvas, a work of literature or a vase touch our feelings and give rise to emotions, ideas and thoughts. The artistic image sparks off an answering reaction in us.

All works of art are, nevertheless, correlative to the aim which we sense or immediately recognise when we seek to define our attitude towards that which we have just seen, read or heard. This does not exclude the possibility that for a time we may find ourselves uncontrollably under the influence of the work with which we have come into contact. There are many eyewitness accounts of how unsophisticated members of the audience actually joined in the events taking place on the stage, thinking that they were really happening. In the same way, when we are listening to a symphony concert or looking at a picture which appeals to our imagination, we may forget for a while all aesthetic criteria and the daily routine which awaits us outside the concert hall or art gallery. The image or, more broadly, imagery in art is always linked in the last analysis either with the representation of reality expressing definite feelings and thoughts, or with their emotional expression capable for the most part of arousing associative representations of a graphic, visual and expressive kind.

In connection with the foregoing it is essential to emphasise once more that in art it is not only the image, understood in the most generally accepted meaning of the word as a live picture, but also the representation, as well as a string of sounds, which do not convey direct information, that are capable of arousing and do arouse associative images and the emotions and ideas accompanying them. The fact is that in our contact with art we inevitably become linked with it

through our perception of images with many and varied meanings and associations. This link is founded either on a pithy, materialised picture, or a utilitarian purpose, such as a work of applied art possesses (in the majority of cases content and purpose are one and the same thing), or on a harmonic combination of sounds, which are of interest to the extent that they are capable of arousing definite feelings and the associative pictures connected with them. Seen in this light works of art with a rich and varied content possessing constantly changing social and other roots may be considered as the starting-point of the manifestation of imagery. In the last analysis the image in art, from the ontological point of view, is a graphic, quite frequently associative representation of life which the work of art arouses in the person perceiving it.

No single example, of course, can claim to be all-embracing. It is, therefore, interesting in this discussion of the representational nature of imagery to turn to music where attention is traditionally concentrated on its expressive attributes. To our mind, Moussorgsky's account to Stasov of the process of composing his *Intermezzo* is a clear illustration of the representational, expressive nature of music. This composition was inspired by a picture of country life which the composer observed when he was visiting his mother in the Pskov Gubernia in 1861.

Against the background of a bright blue, sunny winter's sky a large crowd of peasants were walking towards Moussorgsky across a field, occasionally floundering in the snow-drifts. "This picture," said Moussorgsky, "was at the same time beautiful and picturesque, funny and serious. Then suddenly a crowd of young peasant girls appeared in the distance, walking along a straight

path, laughing and singing. In a flash I had a mental picture of this scene in musical form and the opening melody ranging up and down the scale, à la Bach, took shape quite unexpectedly. The gay, laughing girls appeared to me as a melody, on which I later based the middle part, or trio.”*

The process of composing the Intermezzo can be seen schematically as follows: the sight of the two processions moving towards each other is immediately transformed by the composer's imagination into a pattern of alternating rhythms, a pictorial reproduction of the scene before him. The melodies based on a characteristic rhythm, together with expressive and, as it were, palpable reflections on the Russian people, and the vivid, visual impressions of the bright winter's day also included a tribute to the musical predilections of the composer. All this took place “*in modo classico* in conformity with my musical activities at that particular time”, added Moussorgsky.** The finished work was already a different reality from that seen and created by the composer, now corresponding to proper musical form.

This by no means programmed Intermezzo through its rising and falling rhythm and the melody sometimes reflective, sometimes dancing in major key, not only makes it possible to imagine a scene in many respects analogous to that seen by the composer, but also in certain circumstances helps the listener to, as it were, share Moussorgsky's own feelings and thoughts. Here one may encounter a phenomenon described

* I. I. Lapshin, *Artistic Creation*, Russ. ed., Petrograd, 1922, pp. 152-53.

** Ibid., p. 153.

by Lev Tolstoi. The listener experiences the mood aroused in him by the composer as his own and begins to reflect about life and himself through the clearly defined but imperceptible facets of the moods and thoughts which have been conjured up in him. Something new has now entered his life coupled together with that which he had undergone and experienced earlier.

It is easy to see that the whole projection of the creation and perception of the work as we have described it, is linked with the associative process of working out and transforming a certain series of picture-ideas and the thoughts and feelings which evoked them, many of which are still far from actual materialisation. The subjective and objective principles in the whole of this process which are common to artist and audience alike, intersect at the point where there is an unrepeatable action on the given subject by a work of art as many-sided as life itself.

It should, of course, be borne in mind that the process which we have outlined includes other important factors, requiring an analysis beyond the terms of reference of this article. But it is the purely sociological aspect which is of prime importance here.

What sort of impression, for example, does the image of Prometheus, created by Aeschylus in the 5th century B.C., make on the present generation (including representatives of distinct social groups and classes in a class society). The giant figure of this Titan who defied the gods and stole fire from Olympus appears in subsequent literary personifications either as a scholar opening up new horizons in science, or as a soldier in the Soviet army, the liberator, or in André Gide's novel *Prometheus Unchained*, for example, as the hero who has lost his humanitarian ideals and

become a philistine wringing the neck of the eagle, his former victimhood.

The sociological view of similar and analogous phenomena has a most direct bearing on understanding the subjective, from the point of view of the perceiver, and objective, from the point of view of history, graphic objectification and interpretation of this or that image. The encounter between the artist's embodiment of life and the person perceiving it always takes place on the ground of concretely materialised imagery. This imagery objectifies not only consciously perceived reality, but reality which is quite independent of consciousness.

It would be an oversimplification of the problem to insist that the creative process and the process of perception are, figuratively speaking, a path from one image to the next. In actual fact the peripeteia of the creation and perception of a work of art are highly complex. Almost every case along this path is an exception.

In his *Record of My Musical Life* Rimsky-Korsakov states that the famous aria of Lyubava in the opera *Sadko* suggested itself to him as a result of his instinctive striving for the key of F minor. After composing the aria he wrote the words for it and mentally conjured up the whole of the third scene of *Sadko* for which he asked the poet Belsky to write the libretto. Thus, it was neither an image nor even a consciously conceived task or mood that gave life to a definite musical pattern. On the contrary, the musical structure materialised in the poetic image.

In order to become concentrated in the consciousness, the musical element is projected into it in the form of an image. This process is most clearly seen in the art of choreography. Thus, when embodying Chopin's music in the dance,

Mikhail Fokin seeks its reflection in the natural grace of the body of a trained ballet dancer. He bases the fusion of music and dance on the motivation of the feeling inspired by the music through a meaningful pattern and the plasticity of the human body. The ballerinas' movements and steps give metaphorical expression to the music making the spectator see in them, say, the stirring of delicate flower petals in the gentle, pensive evening breeze or the fluttering of brightly coloured butterflies over a meadow. The musical expression of the awakening of love is associated by the young choreographer Vinogradov in the ballet *Asel* with birds in flight. In this case the dancers are not simply acting a love scene, but embodying the metaphor that love is like flying.

The scope of allegory in art knows no bounds due to the subjectivity of the perception of the image. But it is always by means of representation, vibrant feeling, a practical aim, a metaphorised thought that the image objectifies a living content, and by force of this becomes a graphic object for us, acting not only on the feelings but also on the mind. Imry Eka, the famous Hungarian choreographer, who sees the aim of modern ballet as a "restoration of harmony between the thought bearing the idea, and the form expressing it" has produced some most enlightening views on this subject. "We are striving towards the creation of an art which, through the beauty of the human body, through music and spectacle will exert an active influence on modern man, shaping his attitude towards life."*

All works of art in some degree or other pos-

* A. Dashicheva, "Young People from the Town of Pech", *Teatralnaya Zhizn* No. 7, 1967, p. 29.

sess a multiplicity of meanings, because in order to convey any content it is necessary to use specific artistic means which involve the substitution of the author's original idea. The realistic poster represents the starkest, tersest pictorial solution. But even here in D. Moor's poster entitled "Help!" (1922), for example, the figure of the starving peasant calling out for help conveys only a part of the content concealed behind it to the spectator. The fact that the purely pictorial element arouses a direct, definite association in us is a different matter. This is also the case in the didactic work in true-to-life form, or in the primitive allegory entitled "Good Triumphs Over Evil" (also poster-like in essence). In this work the stereotype subjects, triumphant virtue, the loving couple in blue, the dying villains and all-seeing, unimpeachable chiefs, etc., relieve the artist of the need to create and the person looking at the picture of the need to think. Here we are dealing with multiplicity of meaning at its lowest level. The poster "Help!" judged in relation to its genre and purpose may be considered as a truly great work of art, which can certainly not be said of the didactic, poster-like scene in genre painting. Although, of course, a device discovered for the first time, even if it is the transfer of this same poster to easel painting, may be both creative and artistic.

The degree of multiplicity of meaning in art itself proceeds from the complexity of the artist's thought and his search for means to reveal a new content. This is well illustrated by the work of the artist Alexander Deineka. In his early pictures, Deineka stressed the graphic quality of his compositions to the extreme limit as in "Before Going Down the Mine" (1925) and "Building New Workshops" (1926). Here the artist was

preoccupied with the starkness and self-sufficiency of the device employed and not its content. The angular nature of the compositions was becoming a subject of aesthetic delight for him. In his more mature paintings, however, such as the famous canvas "The Defence of Petrograd" (1928) and "The Defence of Sevastopol" (1942) the compositional architectonic "works" on the subject, revealing the artist's aesthetic attitude not to the device as such, but to the events which it is reproducing. The purely artistic element is combined here with a most complicated range of thoughts and feelings and, naturally, arouses equally complex reactions in the person looking at it.

Examining one form of art after the other it is easy to discern a common principle in the objectification of the image by the mind. Whereas the representational arts give us a finalised, visual image and, in so doing, limit the framework of its interpretations, literature gives us considerably more scope for forming our own images by rendering the picture in words. And music goes even further in this respect. It is not difficult to follow the gradations of its direct and increasingly expanding imagery from musical drama and programmed music serving as an emotional commentary on the text, to symphonic music. In the latter the auditory symbols, images and metaphors belonging to musical language appeal directly to the imagination of the listener arousing his own creative or emotional faculties.

The process of objectifying the artist's thoughts and feelings in a graphic image accessible to perception is broadly the same as that which takes place when a person responds to a work of art. A thorough analysis of this requires an understanding of the internal structure of the

image. However complex the image may be, its structure can be reduced to the metaphorisation of specific material relating to the feelings, concepts, aims and aspirations of man.

By means of a complicated process of comprehension, imagination, abstraction and reordering, the artist creates something new, individual and concrete out of the material given to him by life in the widest sense of the word. The work produced by the artist is always a created, material and materialised object or phenomenon and, therefore, always an image presented to our feelings and our mind.

ART AND MYTH MAKING

Myth making is an integral part of the history of artistic culture. Myth making, in the process of its development, passed through various stages, and various types of myths are known to us.

The original myth was a spontaneous, naïve awareness of the natural, organic link between man and nature, between spirit and being. Afterwards religion, by virtue of its historical, social and gnosiological mission, attempted to give a mystical, illusory, supernatural interpretation to this process of cognition. As a result there arose a syncretic form of religious-art myths.

Some present-day aestheticians in the West try to justify and modernise such a symbiosis, which they declare to be the only possible form of art's existence in the modern world.

"Art is the land of the ideal, the radiant city of regained paradise, happiness and pleasure."*
 "This universum, this lost paradise, cannot be communicated through everyday direct language. Art makes this possible through mediated and hidden communication."** This art restores the fetish: "Anything can become . . . art, religion."***

The real historical process, however, has shown that art divests myth of its religious shell, fills it with an earthly content, makes it *realistic*.

* Quoted from Léopold Flam, "L'art-religion de l'homme moderne". *Revue de l'université de Bruxelles*, No. 5, 1965, p. 377.

** Ibid., p. 380.

*** Ibid., p. 382.

In speaking of the artist's creation of the world it should be borne in mind that his creation is justified only when it bears within itself the seed of the future, when his creative subjectiveness reflects the real tendencies of social development.

It is for this reason that the myth of Prometheus, for example, is precisely such *creation* for the sake of the future. At the same time the myth's message has many significations; and art is called upon to reveal this deversity by stripping it of its mystical fictive character. Anna Akhmatova, for example, writes:

*And don't attempt to hoard away
What heavens have endowed you with.
We know it well—we're doomed to give,
To squander all we have, not save.
So go alone and heal the blind,
To learn, when doubt assails your being,
The crowd's indifference, and find,
In that last hour, your pupils sneering.*

At first glance it would seem as if the poet were giving her own interpretation to the myth of suffering Christ, betrayed by his disciples. By probing deeper to the core of the poet's meaning, however, we are able to reject such a one-sided interpretation and perceive in the poet's image not only a suffering Christ but the theomachist Prometheus, who cannot but lavish his knowledge on men, for it was he who taught them the arts and stole for them from Olympus the sacred fire . . . and incidentally learned the indifference of the crowd. This image is close to the modern man, who has taken the path of struggle for the new word of truth. This mythological figure lends itself perfectly to interpretation from the positions of social progress, from the positions of creation of the new world. The new myth, how-

ever, is created not only by realistic art, it is created also by surrealism and pop-art, for in substance the latter, according to some theoreticians, tend precisely towards the creation of a second world of things, the creation of "values" which have no analogues in natural, social or spiritual realities.

Thus, in his poem "Christ Is Risen", Andrei Bely to some extent loses contact with the real, objective socio-historical processes. His Christ is:

*A wooden body
With the eyes
So strangely sunken.
Deep, black hollows
On Image hardening
And wooden.*

This is an abstraction of man, devoid of any idea of suffering or struggle. It is something irrational and mystical. The reason is because the artist here creates a sort of second reality, a reality that is not only out of touch with the present but does not anticipate the future. This process of creating irrational myths is still more strongly in evidence with Marc Shagall, whose art is a deliberate mystification of reality. This has been noted by the very first students of his art who wrote: "In Shagall's work there are neither clichés nor 'civil pathos', there is merely an intense and sorrowful *myth-craving*."^{*} "With Shagall ... people and objects of dailiness ... appear as 'found objects'."^{**} Strictly speaking, this interpretation of Shagall's art holds good to this day.

In the stained glass monumental paintings at the synagogue in Jerusalem the traditional mo-

^{*} A. Efros and Y. Tugenhold, *Iskusstvo Marka Shagala (The Art of Marc Shagall)*, Moscow, 1918, p. 17.

^{**} *Ibid.*, p. 31.

tifs are rendered in Shagall's inimitable form. "Plants, objects, and above all his animals, are strange, their meaning eludes us in the mythology of Shagall. . . .

"The criteria of genius are always applicable to Shagall. . . .

"He is pre-eminently a religious genius in the more general sense of the word,"* Jean Cassau writes today.

That Shagall really creates irrational myths, one can agree, but this hardly makes him a genius. The farther an artist in his myth-making departs from the real tendencies in public and social life, the more fully does his creation of a "second world of things" become filled with a mystical, irrational and, in the final analysis, a religious content. The pop art of Robert Rauschenberg, the surrealistic works of Salvador Dali or Tanguy awaken no associations that would help a person to take his bearings in the real environment in which he exists or would enable him to glimpse the future. We have here a paradoxical transformation. The artist strives towards myth-making, towards the creation of works of art, but in effect he reverts to religious attitudes, disturbs the organic structure of the myth. For "the myth . . . becomes religious not through its content, but through its connection with religious rites and ideas."**

At the same time, a highly generalised myth divorced from the concrete, real events expressed in art, likewise bears within itself the possibility of the myth being emptied of this real

* Jean Cassau, "Chagall peintre religieux", *Revue d'Esthétique*, Paris, No. 1, t. XVIII, 1965, p. 8-9.

** S. A. Tokarev, *Chto takoye mifologiya (What Is Mythology)*, Collection of Articles on the History of Religion and Atheism, Book 10, Moscow, 1962, p. 355.

content and filled instead with mystificatory, fictive ideas. This is how the religious myth, and generally the illusion-myth, arises. Such a myth is based on the *non-conformity* of the real significance of one or another object, of one or another personality, to the established notions about them. The illusion-myth may be not only purely religious, but social as well, i.e., a form of hypertrophy, idolisation, of socially hidebound or reactionary powers and personalities. Here again is created a peculiar "second world of things" having no real relation to the concrete processes of social development, social progress. It is in this that the "new world" of realistic art, realistic myth-making, differs fundamentally from the social dogmatism of the "second world of things" and the naturalistic and formalistic tendencies of contemporary modernism, whose myths do not remodel or improve the real world.

Thereby they cease to be myths of social significance or art myths, and become cult myths—whether it be the cult of the supernatural irrational Ego, the mystificatory subconsciousness or the traditional religious consciousness. Myth can remain within the pale of art only so long as it reveals in epically clear and artistically graphic form the real ties that exist between man and nature, man and society, only so long as it grasps the *tendency* of social *progress*.

In fact, herein lies its true essence, its true aim and purpose, the very meaning of its existence in the modern spiritual life of society.

Myth, however, cannot be a universal form of modern art,* since it does not enable us to probe

* "Le réalisme de notre temps est créateur de mythes, réalisme épique, réalisme prométhéen." (Roger Garaudy, *D'un réalisme sans rivages*, Paris, 1963, p. 250.)

into the inner workings of the human mind: its architectonics are contraindicated to the modern psychological tendencies in art.

This aspect of the myth was deeply felt by Thomas Mann, who said: "Myth is the basis of life; it is a timeless scheme, a pious formula, and life fills it, unconsciously reproducing its own features in the process. . . ."

Indeed, myth, in a sense, is a scheme. In this sense it reproduces and creates reality in highly generalised forms of epic narrative, but it is incorrect to call it a timeless scheme, the basis of life. Pablo Picasso, for example—as some Marxist philosophers believe—creates modern, not timeless myths, the essence of which is that the artist helps man to overcome his fear in face of the grim social forces, awakens in him a spirit of protest and courage ("Guernica", "The Korean War"), asserts the idea of the responsibility of *every* person for the destinies of mankind, the idea of a conscious clear belief in the inevitable triumph of the benign social forces in the present-day battles for the future, the idea of social progress, which is an organic feature of human life. ("The Joy of Life", "War and Peace").

Even with Ernest Barlach the handling of the traditional Christian myth of the crucifixion strikes a modern note. His "Pietà" (1932) is a passionate exposure of the horrors and anti-humanism of modern warfare. Barlach's austere, plastic, modern handling of the subject strips it of its veneer of Christian compassion and impotence. It ceases to be a Christ myth.

PROBLEM OF ALIENATION

The problem of alienation has loomed big in works on aesthetics published in capitalist countries in the last ten years. Alienation of the individual in society, naturally, concerns not only the artist; this process inherent in bourgeois society is authentically reflected in artistic endeavour in general. It is displayed in bourgeois art, despite all the calls to concentrate on "pure form" and "pure experiment", despite condemnation by bourgeois critics of ideologically oriented, "committed" art. The most evident result of this alienation has been the development of art which refuses to portray the objective world and its active remaker, man.

The term "alienation" has different meanings and nuances in philosophy, economics and politics. It is common knowledge that the economy, relations of production based on private ownership of the means of production, is the main source of alienation in capitalist society. The process of alienation in capitalist economy was disclosed and analysed by Karl Marx.

The relations of production dehumanised and "materialised" by the capitalist economic system gave rise to the fetishism of commodities and subordinated the destinies of people to the laws of the market and also exerted decisive influence on spiritual life in bourgeois society, specifically the main trend of bourgeois art in the 20th century.

The process of dehumanising social relations, of suppressing and alienating the individual in

the course of creating wealth for the few, personified in commodity production, has accompanied bourgeois society since its birth, gradually increasing in scale and strength. The genius of Shakespeare made him discern and reflect the very beginnings of this process with the inception of bourgeois society:

*... Commodity, the bias of the world;
The world who of itself is poised well,
Made to run even upon even ground,
Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,
This sway of motion, this commodity,
Makes it take head from all in differency,
From all direction, purpose, course, intent...**

With the division of labour and the increase in economic alienation in bourgeois society, the workingman less and less has felt that he is an intelligent participant in the production process. He has been turned into a mechanical executor of someone else's will, into a "tiny cog" of capitalism's huge inexorably operating machine. Man is dehumanised, and this process has been portrayed with consummate pictorialism by Charlie Chaplin in his film "New Times".

Money-grabbing, the quest for material wealth by some to the detriment of others, spiritual degradation and the loss of social ideals inevitably lead to the loss of the aesthetic ideals, which are the lodestar in artistic endeavour. Devoid of social and aesthetic ideals, artistic endeavour inevitably runs counter to social progress. The artist finds himself pitted against society, dissociated and alienated from it and ultimately divorced from his people.

* William Shakespeare, *The Life and Death of King John*, Act II, Scene 1.

The social alienation of the artist, the rupture of his ties with reality narrow down the content of his works and sever them from socially significant and genuinely "human" problems. While in the period of emergence of bourgeois society, in the European Renaissance, man was in the focus of artistic works; today when bourgeois society is on the wane, in the epoch of imperialism, man largely disappears from the works of art. In other words, modernistic art is increasingly dehumanised. Man's environment also ceases to be the object of art. Subjected to the influence of alienation, the artist in the bourgeois world withdraws into his own shell because life around him seems to be inexplicably hostile. Having lost living contact with social reality, the artist turns to the subconscious, to the nebulous spheres of irreality in search of an asylum from what seems to him the insoluble contradictions of life.

That bourgeois artists shun problems of reality and seek to escape into an illusory world is obvious. Bourgeois art scholars assert that "denial of the reality of relationships and relevance of purpose, the belief that only individual sensations and not the connections between them are real and the assertion that predictions and goals depend not on order existing in nature, but upon accumulated habits and preconceptions of man",* are characteristic of present-day artists.

Here we have features of the spiritual alienation of the artists, as a result of which they present the subjective world as the only one that actually exists and is worthy of portrayal. This is unequivocally stated by bourgeois artists themselves. The German-American abstractionist Jo-

* L. B. Meyer, "End of Renaissance", quoted by M. Amaya, *Pop Art and After*, N. Y., 1966, p. 30.

seph Albers, for example, says that "for me, the abstraction is real, probably more real, than nature. . . I prefer to see with closed eyes".* The need to substitute an imaginary world for the real world is also postulated by the American sculptor Alexander Calder, known for his stables and mobiles. "The universe is real," he asserts, "but you can't see it. You have to imagine it. Once you imagine it you can be realistic about reproducing it."**

Some artists go even farther in their alienation from reality and deny the necessity and even possibility of any ties with the external world. This is the view of the German-American abstractionist Hans Hoffmann who asserts that for him "art is sufficient unto itself" and the artist "is not dependent on exterior contacts with nature". "You ask, am I painting myself? I'd be a swindler if I did otherwise, I'd be denying my existence as an artist. I've also been asked, what do you want to convey? And I say, nothing but my own nature."***

Bourgeois artists who succumb to alienation and renounce the outside world for this reason, who give up the attempts to understand nature and solve intricate but soluble social problems in effect deprive themselves of creative prospects and even the right to be called true artists. It is hardly possible to regard as a genuine artist a man who creates "works" that are incomprehensible, explain nothing and are devoid of all meaning, from which neither the artist himself nor his audience can derive anything.

Alienation carried to the extreme, to the re-

* *The Artists' Voice*, ed. by K. Kun, N. Y., 1961, p. 11.

** *Ibid.*, p. 42.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 119.

nunciation of contacts with the exterior world has produced a diversity of trends in modernist art—from objectless and abstract art to pop art and “self-destructive” art. The fate of bourgeois modernist artists is reflected in their odd creations devoid of logic and sense. Unwilling to give their works an objective content and making them incommunicable, the artists lose direct contact with their people and fully surrender to the whim of fashion, to the power of the market, which arbitrarily evaluates their creations, without applying any objective artistic criteria. Artists find themselves fully dependent on dealers in art objects, publishers, producers, who at their own discretion rehash their works and subordinate talents to their interests. The complaint of a Hollywood screen playwright is typical in this respect: “They ruin your stories. They massacre your ideas. They prostitute your art. They trample on your pride. And what do you get for it? A fortune.”* The works of “prospering” abstract artists which are bought and displayed in the museums do not attract the public. Museum visitors prefer the works of artists of the past or the present who express their own understanding of the world and have recorded in their canvases life—human aspirations, joys and sorrows.

But it is this abstract art, enjoying no popularity among the public, that is boosted by bourgeois critics. Refusal to reflect the real world and the desire to make art incommunicable are welcomed and supported by bourgeois ideologists because this robs art of its active social function. Art not linked with vital problems of reality and, so to say, “confined in itself”, is a means of

* S. Hall and P. Whannel, *Puddy, The Popular Arts*, London, 1964, p. 341.

diverting attention and interest from questions of social progress. It thus acquires, as it were, "protective" functions. Such art is opposed to social progress and helps to preserve the existing conditions. It is these tasks and functions of art in bourgeois society that are discussed in *The Philosophy of Art History* by Arnold Hauser. "Culture serves to protect society," he writes. "Spiritual creations, traditions, conventions and institutions are but ways and means of social organisation. Religion, philosophy, science, and art all have their place in the struggle to preserve society."*

Having taken the path of alienation and turned to various trends of abstract, incommunicable art, the artist wittingly or unwittingly helps to destroy art as a socially oriented progressive force. But by far not all the artists in bourgeois society have followed the path of alienation. Many artists in capitalist countries employ the methods of critical and socialist realism. Analysing and synthesising phenomena of life around them, these artists not only portray the essence of these phenomena but also reveal their philosophical, political and social sources. Perfecting and developing the realistic method, contemporary writers reveal with great profundity and cogency both the external and inner world of man. Twentieth-century realists follow in this respect the traditions of 19th-century novelists, "whose lucid and picturesque descriptions revealed more political and social truths than was done by politicians, publicists and moralists combined".**

It is the social trend of the art and literature of critical realism and the power of the influence

* A. Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History*, Cleveland and New York, 1963, p. 6.

** K. Marx and F. Engels on Art, Vol. I, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1957, p. 529.

they exert on people that prompted bourgeois ideologists to oppose realism. In the Renaissance period, the bourgeoisie advocated realism in art. At that time it fought against the obsolete feudal system, and realism served it as a sharp weapon. Today when the bourgeois system has outlived itself and turned from a progressive into a declining social system, the bourgeoisie has become hostile towards realism, which portrays the process of its degradation with ruthless precision and visuality.

In an attempt to divert the artists from realism which produces broad and profound canvases of life, bourgeois critics importunately claim that "the artist now sees his objects detached, isolated from their immediate surroundings, things for and by themselves"* and that "no longer do most people believe in the orderly progression of cause and effect; no longer do they believe in the natural goodness of man and the inevitability of progress".**

Bourgeois critics steer artists on to the path of disbelief in man, of individualism and alienation, which leads into a blind alley. Thereby they prepare the ground for the perception by artists of the ideas of existentialism, which has laid its baneful imprint on intellectual life and art in the West. The world surrounding man, pictured by existentialist artists, is devoid of socio-historical laws of development. It is a static world, and no one can change it. Man is powerless in it; he does not understand surrounding reality and is incapable of influencing it. In the most reactionary existentialist works of art, the material world appears as chaos, as something absurd, incom-

* M. Amaya, *Pop Art and After*, New York 1966, p. 19.

** Ibid., p. 15.

prehensible to the human mind. The absurd theatre is a typical example of this art.

The very name of this trend, "absurd art", has a twofold meaning: on the one hand, it expresses the main artistic method of the playwright—it is to exaggerate, to turn into absurdities ideas, phenomena and traits which are artificially isolated and deprived of logical connections; on the other hand, it exactly defines the world outlook of the authors, their understanding and portrayal in art of a world devoid of logic, of an absurd world.

The absurd world created by the playwrights is not a reflection of reality with its laws and inner logic of events and phenomena. At the same time the world of absurd art is not a mere figment of the imagination, is not fully invented. In its details it naturalistically copies reality, some of its phenomena and separate features. Copied from reality, these details are combined by the playwright arbitrarily, outside of the laws of logic, and they form on the stage a visible world of chaos, an absurd world.

Playwrights of the absurd theatre have succeeded in dismembering the vitally integral elements of theatrical performances and in breaking up the connections between their parts. They began their malignant activity not by distorting the characters outwardly, not even by deforming the stage sets, but by breaking up the logic of the plot and other elements of the play. First of all, they deprive their works of local and historical concreteness. Correspondingly, the place of action has become abstract. The authors of absurd art have also cast overboard the time sequence and logic of events. And they top it all by a break-up of logic in the dialogues.

In the centre of the chaotic world of their own

creation they place confused and passive characters alienated from the life around them. In this way they have turned art which for centuries helped people to understand reality into a means of confusing and disorienting them.

Marxism reveals the real causes of such art. With brilliant perspicacity Marx visualised the possibility of attempts by bourgeois ideologists to make the surrounding world "senseless" and precisely formulated the causes of this phenomenon: "Once the interconnection is grasped, all theoretical belief in the permanent necessity of existing conditions collapses before their collapse in practice. Here, therefore, it is absolutely in the interest of the ruling classes to perpetuate this senseless confusion."^{*}

Modernist art has travelled far along the road of isolation from reality charted by bourgeois ideologists. Behind the cover of "originality" any method and trick, which diverts the artists from a realistic reflection of reality, is cultivated in the West. Bourgeois artists feel constant pressure and compulsion to renounce realism. The abstractionist Willem de Kooning said: "At one time, it was very daring to make a figure red or blue—I think now that it is just as daring to make it flesh-coloured."^{**}

The loss of communication, the rupture of contact with reality, which is vitally necessary for the flourishing of art, renunciation of content, the distortion and ignorance of the laws of social development in the works of modernist artists—all are symptoms of crisis in contemporary bourgeois art. This situation worries many bourgeois

^{*} Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, p. 252.

^{**} M. Amaya, *Pop Art and After*, New York, 1966, p. 1.

critics. They are concerned over the fate of art itself and of the artists who are wasting their talent on barren and anti-humane activity. "Are we at the beginning of a new period of medieval obscurantism," F. Alexander, an American psychoanalyst writes, "in which the individual will lose all his spiritual and political freedom and, in order to save himself as an individual, will have to be content with withdrawal into the archaic wishful imagery of his unconscious world? In his fear and confusion will he yield to some kind of tyranny and give up all further attempts to master realistically his environment and his fate by increasing his own knowledge, understanding and reason? Will he be satisfied with powerless protest, flaunting his contempt of reason, ridiculing the world and retreating into a dream world of surrealistic magic?"*

The crisis of art in the capitalist world has become deep and protracted. But it has not paralysed the progress of art in the Western countries: many artists have succeeded in stepping beyond the bounds of the bourgeois world outlook and their creative endeavour is flowing into the stream of progressive art, which energetically works for social change and champions the ideas of humanism and the freedom and happiness of mankind.

* F. Alexander, "The Psychoanalyst Looks at Contemporary Art", *Art and Psychoanalysis*, New York, 1963, p. 361.

ARTISTIC IMAGERY

The main distinction between artistic images and other forms of imagery lies in the special nature of their content. They are a means of reproducing the characteristic features of social life and expressing an ideological understanding and assessment of it. In so doing they help to produce an expressive, artistic typification of these features by transforming life's individual properties. Consequently, the images themselves are the specific form of works of art.

The artistic image is a reproduction of the characteristic social features of life in its individual aspect. Here the individual features and properties of the reality reproduced become the material components of the image itself.

It is therefore important, particularly in the case of the visual arts, not to confuse and identify the artistic image with the concrete content depicted in it, or with the social character typified in this content. The artistic image is a complex phenomenon of form. It is constructed primarily from material components. In the visual arts these are the living details of the individual portrayed, his external appearance (portrait) and surrounding, his actions, experiences, opinions and relations with other individuals. All these details become component parts of the image, having been selected by the artist from a wealth of other details present in the life of the individual portrayed, and moulded together with the assistance of those material means of reproduction which are specific to the given art form:

words, gestures and mime, lines and paint, plastic materials, etc. Each material component of the image is typical and expressive to the extent that it reflects the content of the work.

However, artistic images contain more than the material components of the life which they depict. They invariably possess in addition the components of their own artistic execution.

By the execution of artistic images we mean the principles and devices employed in using the specific means of this or that art form.

In literary works these are the stylistic components. These are firstly the expressiveness of individual words resting partly in their phonetic make-up and partly in the various emotional connotations arising from their allegorical properties, and, secondly, the expressiveness of the intonational and syntactical combination of words in phrases, in particular, the rhythmic expressiveness of such combinations. In mime it is the expressiveness of the poses, gestures and movements which produces a typification of the characteristic features. In painting it is the principles and devices employed in the selection, combination and application of the paint. In sculpture it is the plastic use of the materials, marble, stone, metal, etc.

In the visual arts the material components are of independent, prime importance. The expressiveness of the execution is important only to the extent that it strengthens and develops the material expressiveness of the images. If the expressiveness of the execution of the images is self-sufficient and does not spring from, develop or enrich the material expressiveness, but rather dominates or dilutes it, the essence of the visual arts is violated, the work oversteps its limits and becomes aesthetically unconvincing.

Epic and dramatic literature reproduce integral human characters in their objective life in various temporal and spatial conditions, the developing and changing actions and relations which go to make up events and happenings. On this basis they can also reproduce the subjective side of the characters and their inner world. This is done not merely by portraying actual occurrences and the characters' own statements, but also by a direct portrayal of the actual processes of their emotional experiences. All this gives the epos and drama tremendous scope for material detailisation and the complex combination of external detail and objective action with the inner spiritual life of the characters.

All these details appear with the help of words of poetic speech in their nominative function. But poetic speech also has an expressive function, its own stylistic expressiveness. The latter must not be developed independently. It must not deprive the material components of their clarity and relief and distract the attention of the reader or audience from them. On the contrary, its job is to strengthen and enrich the expressiveness of the material components.

Stylistic expressiveness need not necessarily play a significant part in the epos, as the works of such great writers as Lev Tolstoi, Gorky, Sholokhov and others show. The epos can make excellent use of its material expressiveness. Epic works which abuse stylistic expressiveness usually destroy themselves as a result. The "ornamental novels" of the Russian symbolists are a good illustration of this point, in particular the novels of Andrei Bely.

A good example of the material expressiveness of literary images, developed to the limits of the phantastic and at the same time strengthened and

enriched by stylistic expressiveness, is to be found in certain episodes of Alexander Tvardovsky's poem "Vasily Tyorkin," in particular the chapter entitled "Death and the Soldier". The writer concentrates on showing the civic awareness, moral control and sense of purpose of his hero. These qualities help the soldier to go on fighting and endure the terrible trials of war. At this particular point Tyorkin shows his staunch determination in the face of death. Severely wounded and bleeding profusely he concentrates on overcoming his physical and spiritual weakness and keeping alive until help comes. He fights an inner struggle between the exhaustion cast by the shadow of death and his reason which tells him to take hold of himself, his will to live and defeat the enemy.

The poet has transformed this inner struggle into an argument with Death. Using material detailisation he has turned Death into an independent figure. Death "leant over him", "bent down", "moved up to his shoulder", etc. She talks to the soldier "laughing", trying to persuade him to go with her, to give way to fatigue and accept the inevitability of the end. She tries to turn him against life with memories of the cold, terror and filth of war, the devastation of his country, the possibility of being a cripple for the rest of his life. But Tyorkin meets this with firm refusal, irony, the will to suffer, love of life and his country, thirst for victory and a vision of that triumphant day and the reunion with his loved ones. And he manages to resist until the stretcher-bearers come for him. They carry him away with Death following behind in the hope that he will not pull through.

All the material components of this picture are both characteristic and expressive. But they

are developed and enriched by the expressiveness of the stylistic detail, the linguistic detail of the dialogue.

Painting, as distinct from the literary epos, being a spatial art can reproduce the social characteristics of life only in one instant of its objective, spatial existence—in the frozen form, poses, gestures or actions of the individuals portrayed against the background of a landscape or everyday life. Thus it has much less scope for material detailisation. Nevertheless, this material detailisation executed with the help of paint is perceived directly and makes a much stronger impression. In painting, as in the epos, the details of the portion of life being portrayed must retain their basic meaning. The details of execution, the mixing and application of the paint, should assist and enrich the object being depicted, not distort or devour it.

A good example of sensitively developed material expressiveness of images in painting, considerably strengthened by their manner of execution is to be found in Deineka's "Defence of Petrograd". This picture illustrates the active participation of the proletarian masses of the young Soviet capital in the Civil War and the defence of the city. It shows a solemn, determined procession of proletarian battalions, serried ranks of soldiers and workers, men and women alike, marching to the front with weapons in their hands, and from the opposite direction scattered groups of wounded soldiers slowly dragging themselves back from the front to the capital.

In his depiction of reality the artist has shifted the space-time relation to enhance the expressiveness of the material details of his portrayal. He has painted the lines of people going to battle

in energetic curves in the foreground of the lower half of the canvas and above them, in the upper half, are the strings of wounded in the background walking slowly in the opposite direction along the fine clear outlines of a bridge beyond which the waters of the Baltic can be seen in the distance with the blurred shapes of ships and houses. The result is a sharp, spatially condensed expressive contrast between the two movements which highlights the essence and heroic pathos of both.

The material expressiveness is considerably heightened by the manner of execution. It is painted in flat, poster-like style emphasised by the symmetrical squareness of the bridge. All the figures in the picture are drawn in a generalised, diagrammatic style which adds to the impression of dynamic movement. This impression is heightened even further by the range of colours used, a dramatic contrast between the black and greys of the human figures and the bridge and the white background. The expressiveness of the execution is developed to the utmost limits but is firmly rooted in the material expressiveness of the painting, and the limits of painting as a visual art are strictly observed.

Modern "abstractionist" painting, on the other hand, flagrantly violates these limits. Artists tending in this direction try to convey their decadent attitude towards life by the sole effect of a pattern of lines which do not represent anything at all, by bright blobs of colour and abstract shapes devoid of all meaning. Their art has been stripped entirely of its subject matter. It is a frenetic, futile attempt to accomplish through the medium of a visual art the tasks which can be performed only by an art form of a different "expressive" kind.

The characteristic feature of imagery in the "expressive" arts is the prime importance of the execution, to which material detailisation is not only subject, but also becomes, as it were, one aspect of the expressiveness of the manner of execution of the work. However, even here, it still provides art with its basic meaning.

This characteristic feature is explained by the subject matter of the "expressive" arts and the nature of its artistic typification. As has already been stated, the subject matter of the "expressive" arts is the subjective side of the social characteristics of life, human emotions as a single stream of impressions, reflections, feelings and aspirations.

But it is extremely difficult to reproduce this stream of human feelings in their own psychic nature with the same directness as the visual arts reproduce the phenomena of the objective world. It is also most difficult to typify the characteristic features of emotions by means of depicting their individual properties. On the other hand, it is quite possible to convey emotions in the language of the art itself with the help of this or that system of expressive means. Emotions can be typified by an individual combination of the expressive details of the manner of execution.

Thus, the new, depicted individuality of characteristic human emotions appears in the "expressive" group of arts not as itself, but as an individuality which expresses its artistic images, literary in lyrics, audial in music, choreographic in the dance and architectonic in architecture. It is precisely the originality of the structure of images and their execution which isolates, strengthens and develops the characteristic features of human emotions in their ideological comprehension and assessment by the artist. The objective

side of the images, the individual features and qualities of the emotions, is correspondingly transformed becoming one of the aspects of the execution of the work's images. But the whole work is, nevertheless, impregnated with its meaning.

This characteristic feature of the imagery of the "expressive" arts is to be found least of all in lyrical poetry. Because of the universality of its means of reproducing life, i.e., human speech, lyrical poetry is capable of reproducing human emotions together with those phenomena of the objective world which stimulate them and towards which they are directed. Lyrical poetry frequently depicts phenomena from social or private life and nature, but only to the extent that they arouse the feelings, aspirations and reflections of the lyrical "subject" in their social characteristics and only to the extent that the phenomena "are invested" with emotions and objectify them.

All this distinguishes poetry sharply from the other "expressive" arts. But when it turns to the reproduction of the actual processes of human feelings it reveals their general characteristics. The artistic typification of emotions in their social character is carried out by the expressive combination of the individual details of the stylistic manner of execution: semantic, intonational and syntactical, rhythmic and phonetic. The stylistic execution, however, acquires content only through the semantic meaning of the words in their nominative, cognitive function. Thanks to this alone lyrical poetry remains an "expressive" art of words. If the words of a lyrical poem lose their nominative meaning, they become meaningless combinations of sounds, "sheer word-making". Then the whole stylistic structure of the

poem is deprived of artistic content and stands outside art.

At first glance the expressive execution of musical works appears to be more self-sufficient. Their manner of execution seen as a whole may appear to be a completely artificial structure, not corresponding to any aspect of human life in its social character.

But even music has a meaningful basis. However complex and refined musical composition may be in its specific system of means of expression, it performs the general ideological tasks and follows the inner laws of its art only when it is based on melody, and only if all the other aspects of composition (harmony, counterpoint, dynamics, rhythmical intensification, use of register, instrumentation, etc.) serve as an accompaniment to and development of its melodic base. The melodic quality of musical works, whilst containing a harmonic, rhythmical solution and by virtue of this being a phenomenon of musical execution, also invariably possesses a material aspect. This is the basic movement of any melody with which it is involuntarily but strongly associated in the consciousness of all those listening to it, or with the expressive, emotional intonation of the human voice, or again with the intonation of human gestures and body movements. All these elements convey the characteristic social features of human experience.

Such associations became firmly fixed in people's consciousness as far back as that period in the development of human society when music originated and developed as a "syncretic" whole with lyrical poetry (songs) and dances. All the subsequent development of music as a unique and complex system of sound expression varying with different national and cultural traditions rests

on the development of these associations. They are the basis for an appreciation of music in which people with widely divergent aesthetic tastes, interests, habits and preferences and, therefore, varying interpretations and evaluations, nevertheless find an area of common ground which makes possible a certain degree of mutual understanding.

Music must never violate these "concrete" emotional associations which link it with life through its manner of execution, and they should on no account be totally disregarded. Such an approach places music outside the limits of art as the reproduction of the characteristic features of life in the light of an ideological understanding and assessment of it.

The concrete significance of imagery transformed in its expressive manner of execution is to be found in the works of the other "expressive" arts, dancing and architecture. And each of them has its own distinctive brand.

Such are the distinctive features of artistic imagery, which is both a means and a result of applying the fundamental "law of reproducing" life in art—the expressive, artistic typification of the characteristic features which proceeds from the accomplishment of the ideological task of art.

ART AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Human history, as we know, is a natural process in the course of which mankind passes through a number of periods, epochs, stages, of socio-economic formations. Within the limits of each of these, the pattern of art changes in different ways. This does not, however, arrest its progress. One such epoch is determined by industrial scientific and technological revolution. It comprises two socio-economic formations—capitalism and communism. The latter evolves through revolutionary changes in capitalism, as the negation and antithesis of capitalism. Needless to say, this social conflict is not without its effect on the pattern of art, which differs under capitalism and under communism. Therefore any attempt to combine these patterns or equalise them under cover of the “industrial society” concept, would mean a retreat from or renunciation of a genuinely scientific solution of the problem. How does the scientific and technological revolution influence the arts? It should be remembered that the machine method of production is the basis of urbanisation in the modern world, when man is “withdrawn” from his natural environment and made dependent on his own artificially created conditions; the nature and rhythm of the machine’s work largely determine the psychic condition of modern man; it is the prerequisite and basis of mass production, which is capable of unlimited growth and universal development; it is the condition of manufacture of standardised goods, satisfying the median

requirements of man—it suffices to remember all this in order to understand the manner and scale in which the machine method of production predetermines the gratification not only of the material, but of the spiritual needs of man, including the aesthetic.

Machine production exercises an important influence on the development of art. In some cases (architecture, designing, the applied arts) this influence is direct and immediate, in others (literature, the cinema, music, painting, etc.) it follows devious paths. Schematically these two cases can be represented as follows: “machine—work of art—man” and “machine—relations of production—superstructure—social psychology . . .—man”. Naturally, both these schemes are tentative; the links forming this chain are actually more in number, the connections between them more mobile, etc. Nevertheless, they express two basic tendencies: the forms of art whose main function is the gratification of material needs, develop under the badge of unification; as for the fine arts proper, we have here a sharp cleavage of aesthetic conceptions.

These tendencies are not merely particular cases of reality; they express a general pattern of social development, testifying both to the substantial unity of people and to the infinite individualisation of their spiritual reserves. At the same time they reflect definite features peculiar to the development of 20th-century culture. In overcoming national isolation, this culture strives towards a unity conditioned by a single machine method of production and technical means of communication between people. This tendency became clearly defined as far back as the mid-19th century. Marx and Engels wrote about this in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: “The intel-

lectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature."*

Until the October Revolution of 1917 world art was involved with capitalist material production and consumption, and prevailing bourgeois philosophy. Socialism, however, introduced a new law-governed tendency. The bourgeoisie is no longer able to form the spiritual pattern of universal culture in its own image. Its opportunities are steadily narrowing and its desire to hold its ground is becoming keener than ever. It finds itself in the position of that tragic hero whose heart is torn by the fatal disparity between means and aim, between his capabilities for wanting and for doing. The logic of torn consciousness places the bourgeoisie in opposition to objective reality, as a result of which its consciousness assumes fantastic and even absurd forms.

In the course of a definite period, socialism finds itself in the position of a society that is obliged to catch up with some capitalist countries which have moved ahead in technology. In that case, what is its appeal? It is in its social relations, which give unlimited scope for the development of the productive forces and make it possible radically to improve the material well-being of the working masses; it is in the fruits of universal education, the development of genuine democracy, its humanistic ideology, etc.

It is this circumstance that compels bourgeois philosophy and aesthetics to persistently propound the thesis about the substantial role of tech-

* Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1962, p. 38.

nics in the development of spiritual culture, a thesis which develops in two directly opposite forms—the positive and negative.

The Fauvists, Dadaists, Surrealists and Existentialists see in logic, in rationalism, in machinism, principles alien or even hostile to man. In this connection Salvador Dali, for example, prophesied that “mechanical civilisation will be destroyed by war. The machine is doomed to crumble and rust, gutted on the battlefields, and the youthful, energetic masses that have constructed them are doomed to serve as cannonfodder”.*

And so the machine is a source of social evil and a means by which reason commits suicide.

Other views are expounded by the Cubists, the Futurists, by O. Spengler, by the Constructivists, by the proponents of kinetic art, of pop art.

Thus, Spengler finds that the architechtonic abilities of the West-European individual were exhausted a century ago.

In his opinion, however, the creative inferiority of the Faustian individual is compensated by the machine, by technics. “To me, the depths and refinement of mathematical and physical theories are a joy; by comparison, the aesthete and the physiologist are fumblers,” he declares. “I would sooner have the fine mind-begotten forms of a fast steamer, a steel structure, a precision lathe, the subtlety and elegance of many chemical and optical processes, than all the pickings and stealings of present-day ‘arts and crafts’, architecture and painting included.”**

Spengler’s conception crystallised into a world outlook at the beginning of the 20th century and

* S. Dali, *The Secret Life of S. Dali*, N. Y., 1942, p. 303.

** Oswald Spengler, *Decline of the West*, Vol. I, New York, 1947, pp. 43-44.

predetermined the development of modernist art for many years to come.

The theme of technology, of the machine, supersedes and often ousts that of the human being in modernism. The dehumanisation of art is thus carried out under the guise of its technologisation.

The philosophic case made out for this process has several variants. In one the machine is offset against art, in another technology is represented as the sole principle, inspiring the modern artist; in a third man is treated as a still unsubdued rival of the machine (thus, the Manifesto of an "Anonima Group" of artists regards "man as the machine's rival. Through it, man says to the machine: 'I *am* precise and accurate. But I can turn logic to my own uses as you cannot; I can even take logic to its extreme where it becomes conflict and contradiction. I can give a kind of information which *surprises*.' It is debatable as to how objective and impersonal such 'information' is").*); in a fourth the machine is regarded as a factor that radically changes man's vision of reality, the nature of its perception; man is supposed to be interested, not in what he sees, but how he sees, and so on.

All these conceptions point to the fact that a society torn by self-corroding antagonisms breeds a fetishist consciousness, which endows the machine with creative power or regards it as a destructive force, or combines the two possibilities together.

The machine, as a tool, is a means of accumulating experience, within the limits of which is expressed man's utilitarian attitude towards reality. The efficiency of a machine is the chief cri-

* *The New American Arts*, ed. by R. Kostelanetz, N. Y., 1966, p. 92

terion of its performance, its function. It determines the place which the machine occupies among other man-made values. Regarded in this light, the principle of machinism is usually contraposed to everything aesthetic, which is treated as something self-contained and aimless.

Proceeding from this contraposition, the fetishist mentality prefers utility to beauty, practical action to thought, the present to the future. Progressive-minded artists see in this an indication of the anti-humanistic essence of a society, which, by its one-sided approach to life, destroys the harmony of creation and in the final analysis threatens all human values. Karel Čapek, in his famous play *R.U.R.*, showed that the striving towards progress on the basis of opposing the machine to man is fraught with tragic consequences for the whole of society.

From the point of view of fetishist mentality the robot is an ideal creature, since it is not linked to life, is deprived of pleasures, feeling of love, a "soul", etc., i.e., all that is regarded from the utilitarian point of view as a manifestation of the imperfections of human nature. The robot is capable of unlimited improvement, whereas the human individuality is restricted in the display of its manual and intellectual energy. Man's perceptive faculties do not extend beyond the frontiers of the macrocosm, whereas the machine is capable of receiving information coming from both the immeasurably small and immeasurably great worlds. On the basis of this analogy, one of the characters in Čapek's play declares: "... strictly speaking, man has become a relic of the past". Here the mythology of the 20th century takes its rise—the religion of the sceptic, who has long lost faith both in man and in mankind.

The machine worshipper tries to cast off responsibility for the catastrophic course of events, for the dangerous or disastrous solution of social problems. That is why he readily blames it on the mechanical contrivance, which is supposed to possess objectivity. "Once such a master," writes N. Wiener, "becomes aware that some of the supposedly human functions of his slaves may be transferred to machines, he is delighted. At last he has found the new subordinate—efficient, subservient, dependable in his action, never talking back, swift, and not demanding a single thought of personal consideration."*

Analysis, generalisation, thought, emotion, which are characteristic of both a scientific and artistic cognition of reality and its appraisals, are not without reason regarded by machine worshippers as factors which tend to develop in man independence and self-dependence. It is for this reason that machine worship, which reduces human faculties to the "ideal" image of a robot, proves to be hostile to all creative activity, in which everything is unique and individual.

Proceeding from this feature of the machine, which levels all gifts, some philosophers father the idea that the machine kills the crafts, as a result of which the distinction between art and non-art is obliterated.

Advocates of this point of view sometimes quote the following supportive scheme: during the Renaissance, prosperous merchants and landowners were patrons of the arts and crafts, whose produce was designed for a very small section of society, for its élite. Beginning with the early 19th century the position radically changes:

* N. Wiener, *God and Golem, Inc.*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964, p. 55.

the industrial revolution upsets the balance between the limited production and élite consumption of works of art. Industrialisation, which draws increasing numbers of people into the sphere of material production, creates the necessary conditions and premises for mass consumption. This stimulates the development of production, which is largely standardised and calculated for the satisfaction of mediocre tastes. Deprived of the patronage and encouragement of these patrons of art and involved, in addition, in unequal competition with the machine, the artist-craftsman is steadily ruined to the point of extinction. The products of machine production gradually oust the wares of the handicraftsman.

In the middle of the 20th century utensils produced by industrial methods—but already worn out—make their appearance as “works of art” at exhibition stands. In this connection A. Schoener writes: “... both pop art and op art have raised this question: where is the borderline between art and non-art? The answer is simple. The borderline is vanishing.”*

The answer sums up, as it were, the two-century development of art in bourgeois society: it is gradually reduced to the level of ordinary objects.

And so the machine, a socially neutral factor, is here depicted in the role of motive power in the social process. Actually, the case is somewhat different. Handicraft art disappears not because it has met its antipode in the machine, but because it cannot stand up to economic competition with the owners of machines, which mechanically turn out “works of art” designed, not for the individual, but for an abstract, median mar-

* *Art in America*, New York, March-April 1966, p. 40.

ket consumer. As for patronage of the arts, this does not disappear even in the 20th century; art dealers, collectors, owners of private museums continue to patronise artists, regarding the collection of works of art as a reliable form of investment of capital, since both during the Renaissance and in modern bourgeois society (in the age of mass, standardised production) works of art fetch monopoly prices.

Thus, the decisive role in determining the fate of modern art belongs not to industrialism, as such, but to social relations, within the system of which works of art form part of the general commodity-money exchange.

Socialist society, like bourgeois society, is undergoing industrialisation. But it is free from economic competition or private capital investment. The fate of works of art, therefore, is determined not so much by exchange value as by use value. The standard of workmanship and the aesthetic taste of the customer (this role is filled by social institutions) are the two agents upon whose interaction depends the recognition or non-recognition of the artist, consequently also the economic appraisal of his work. That is the reason why, under socialism, side by side with the development of mass production, there exist the crafts. Khokhloma, Kholui, Fedoskino, Palekh and other places where celebrated Soviet craftsmen live, are familiar all over the world. Industrialisation has had a beneficial effect on them. The demand for their products has grown considerably, so much so that the question of increasing and training personnel for the Soviet Union's art industry has become the order of the day.

One of the most urgent aspects of this problem consists in the following: the principle of industrialism boils down, in effect, to substituting the

machine first for man's manual power, and subsequently, partially, for his intellectual energy. The natural result of such a substitution is to gradually relieve man of the duty, imposed by physical necessity, of expending the main fund of his time on obligatory work. The more effectively the machine does the work of man, the more free time does he have for self-development, for the unfolding of all his gifts and abilities.

Under socialism, where industrial production is highly developed, the equality of rights and obligation to work, which apply to everybody, regulate the redistribution of leisure time in such a manner that more of it becomes available to all members of society and not just some part of it. In this way are created the necessary facilities for the development of amateur art activities on a mass scale. In this connection the founders of scientific communism pointed out that in a communist society not everyone would perform the work of a Raphael. But everyone who had a Raphael in him would have a chance to develop freely.

Under socialism leisure provides scope for the self-assertion of the personality, for creation, including aesthetic creation.

It is said that industrialism will ultimately lead to cybernetic machines, correspondingly programmed, creating paintings, sculptures, symphonies, etc., i.e., they will translate aesthetic ideas into visible and audible forms. A person who wishes to make his contribution to what we call art will merely have to press an appropriate button. And since anyone can press a button, anyone can become an artist. Those who entertain this conception overlook one very important fact, namely, that only such a person can become an artist for whom creation according to the laws

of the beautiful is a calling and a need. If the "creative act" is reduced to a mere physical effort, it cannot in any way enrich either the person from whom that action proceeds or the art to which it is directed. A machine may to some extent be used in the creative process, but this circumstance does not in any way relieve man of the necessity of thinking imaginatively.

Let us touch on another aspect of the problem.

A conflict arises between man and his industrial environment. The gist of it is this: the work of numerous machines creates unfavourable conditions for human life—pollution of the air, rivers, and so on. In addition the machine imposes on man its own rhythm of work, movement and life. The dehumanisation of environment, depersonalisation of the human being, may be neutralised or checked only by measures that ensure the free play of society's vital activity. An important role in this process may belong to the art of town planning—layout, composition, ensemble, etc.—aiming at the creation of an artificial environment governed by the laws of the beautiful. The effectiveness of town-planning depends not only on the volume of capital investments, but on the nature of the economic laws. Economic competition, as we know, produces urban chaos, whereas the law of planned and balanced development of the economy makes for effective town planning developments. This is another example showing that the role of the machine in the development of aesthetic aspects of industrial environment is relative, whereas that of social relations is decisive.

Social relations are a determining factor even where arts that owe their origin to technical progress are concerned. Thus, photography, the cinema, radio and television could arise only

on the basis of scientific and technological revolution. For these to become arts it was necessary to have not only a definite standard of technics, but a mass audience as well. The new forms of art are extremely democratic; they appeal to every person, are accessible to him, give him an opportunity to discover and appraise the world for himself, to express himself aesthetically.

Photography, the cinema, radio and television are the most mobile and communicative of the arts. They enable everyone to delve into life during the actual process of events and to immediately communicate his aesthetic judgements of reality to a practically unlimited number of people interested in that particular kind of information and appraisal.

Thus, the development of technology brings art closer to the masses. Whether art itself meets the needs and requirements of the masses depends on its message, its forms, its language, etc. If art appeals to the people and with the aid of technology proves accessible to every member of the public, its ideas are capable of becoming a powerful material force. If, on the contrary, it appeals to the élite, if it is non-popular, even anti-popular, as in the case of modernism, for example (according to the testimony of philosophers like Ortega y Gasset, Pickard and others), then technology is being used for an evil end, conveying to the people a message of moral perversion. That is the reason why, under modern conditions, the problem of art's popular roots assumes such an acute and urgent form.

As far back as the 19th century V. Belinsky pointed out that the popular spirit was not a virtue, but an essential condition of all genuine works of art.

The language of the people, their inflections

of speech, their vision of the world, national self-consciousness, mentality, their ornamentation and symbolics, etc., create an unparalleled colouring, integral, original and inimitable. In this way every people enriches world culture. This has always been the case, even when the role of a people in the creation of spiritual values was much smaller than it is today.

Under present conditions the people exercise an increasing influence on the development of art, not only because they are becoming a major factor in determining the conditions and nature of consumption of works of art. They are becoming the real subject, the creator of art.

The scientific and technological revolution creates the material preconditions for obliterating substantial distinctions between mental and manual work, between town and country, for distributing work and pleasures evenly among the members of the community, for turning work into a form of free creative activity. By this means there are created within the industrial society favourable material and spiritual conditions for developing all forms of creativeness, the aesthetic included. The problems of creativeness, however, cannot and will not be solved on a socially neutral basis.

Modern society is not homogeneous. There is a capitalist society and a socialist society. The real soil for art and scope for its development exist only in that society where the masses rise to genuine creative activity in all spheres of social life, where art becomes part and parcel of social activity, that is, in socialist society.

NATURE, SOCIETY AND ART

Nature, society and art are correlative, each being a special aspect of a single developing reality.

Nature is the primary part of the correlation, the latter two deriving from it. It existed and exists by itself, prior to and independent of any society. Thus it can be said that nature is the eternal basis and source of existence of man's social essence, that the latter is becoming alienated from nature without breaking away from it completely and is developing according to its own specific laws and patterns.

Like nature society with its intrinsic laws exists objectively. But society's objectivity is distinct from that of nature. Whereas nature's existence does not depend on humanity, society's existence is dependent on nature but not on an individual or a group of people. For the individual, society is objective reality just as nature is. Born and existing in society, the individual is dependent on it in his actions, which are determined by the specific features of the social environment outside of which man is inconceivable.

Art makes its appearance and exists as a special form of perception of nature and of the self-knowledge of society as a whole, of classes, etc. Naturally, the purpose of art cannot be reduced to this alone, for it has several other functions. This above all predetermines the intrinsically objective nature of art. Art is objective in many respects simultaneously, its content is ultimately borrowed from nature and society; the laws of

art's development, being relatively independent, are subject to the laws of nature and especially society; and, last but not least, works of art, being the objectivation of the consciousness and feeling of their creators in the materials of nature and industry (canvas, oil-paints, marble, etc.) are given to mankind at different epochs as something objective alongside other objects and phenomena of nature and society. Reality surrounding man consists of objects of nature, industry and also products of artistic creativity which impress people in various ways, including aesthetically, and play different roles in their aesthetic education.

The different aspects of the objective world—nature, society and art—represent the active elements constantly interacting on one other. The forms of this interaction vary, but as far as art is concerned there are two main aspects: the influence of nature and society on art, and the influence of art on nature and society. The facts of this interaction were observed and emphasised both by Hegel, the idealist, and Marx and Engels, the materialists. The latter were the first to give a scientific explanation of them.

Art is bound up with nature and always will be. This connection is not fortuitous, nor is it superficial. It is essential, intrinsic and indestructible. Art is inconceivable without nature and outside it. Nature supplies art with the maximum of what it needs for its development: subjects, motives, forms, colours and moods.

Nature is bound up with art first and foremost in that art reflects nature, being its artistic image. Music and literature, landscape painting, still life, animalistic drawing and sculpture occupy a prominent place in the artistic creativity of almost all times. The aesthetic features of some arts

depend on the influence of natural conditions. For instance, according to Hippolyte Taine, the excellent subtle colouring of the painters who worked in Flanders and Holland in the 17th century was due to favourable climatic conditions in those countries. Rubens's paintings owe their splendour, magnificence and richness to the nature of Flanders. Landscapes, climate and other features leave their mark on colour, composition and characters portrayed in the paintings created in different countries. Thus the artist Saryan, who lives in sunny and mountainous Armenia, prefers to portray mountains and valleys, blue sky and bright sun pouring its light on the hot, rocky earth. The American artist Rockwell Kent portrays places in the permafrost zone, where there is little sunlight and much gloomy sky and green-white ice. He likes to depict the snow-capped mountains with their sparse vegetation in cold tones.

Nature also influences the development of art in that it supplies materials (marble, wood, etc.) whose original natural properties determine the way they are used. No matter how far modern science and technology and, particularly the chemical industry, have advanced in creating new synthetic, man-made materials, they are unable to create something that is ultimately outside nature. Nowadays wide use is made of both natural and artificial materials in art.

Moreover, natural environment is an essential element of architecture, on which much of its expressiveness depends. Thus there is an obvious connection between pyramids and sphinxes and the desert, or between the temples and shrines of ancient India and jungles.

If anything, the connection between nature and art is becoming ever stronger and wider thanks

to technological progress and the advance of geographical and space studies. Moreover, it is becoming deeper and more purposeful.

Nevertheless, the role of nature in the development of art must not be exaggerated: the social or historical factor remains the fundamental one.

This can be seen from the following: a) within a certain geographical zone changes in art occur much more rapidly than they do in nature; b) under identical geographical conditions in various countries, art, including landscape painting, differs as regards both form and content (realistic, romantic, progressive and reactionary). This being the case (as shown by numerous examples), we must conclude that not geographical, but social factors play a decisive role in the development of art. Opinions held by some scientists—Montesquieu, Buckle and Mechnikov—that the geographical factor plays the principal role in cultural development, hold no water. Moreover, as human society progresses even the secondary effects, exerted by the geographical environment, the natural conditions on art, are becoming less and less direct and more and more filtered through the social factors (economic conditions, class struggle, etc.).

Let us dwell briefly on a few examples that illustrate the above.

The ancient Greek sculptors (Phidias, Praxiteles, Myron and others) achieved the highest degree of perfection. Sculpture continued to serve as a model and standard for plastic art in general. However, in the Greece of today where the natural factors have not changed substantially since antiquity we see no Phidias, no Praxiteles, and no Myron. There are good sculptors in this country who merit our close attention and who reflect real life and express the ideas of the various

strata of Greek society. Unfortunately, there is no sign of that great plasticity (its splendid development of universal historical significance) which was the case in the sculpture of the ancient Greek polis.

If we look at the recent past, say, at the literature and art of France, Belgium and other European countries in the 19th century, we see that different artistic phenomena appeared in identical natural conditions. According to Montesquieu, Buckle and Mechnikov, who held that the natural environment plays the decisive role in cultural development, these phenomena should only have appeared in different geographical zones. Here we have the various forms of traditional academism, realism, romanticism, both reactionary and progressive, and classicism. They are followed by impressionism, post-impressionism, expressionism and many other recent artistic trends bearing the stamp of national peculiarity. All this shows once more that the decisive role in artistic development is played not by nature, nor by geographical conditions, but by society with its laws of contradictory development.

Society plays this role irrespective of what is depicted in art—whether it is man, a social relationship or nature, even where it may seem that everything depends on nature itself and nothing else. Nature for the artist is not only (and often not so much) an object of reflection, but also an object of disclosing the artist's consciousness and feelings, which are always socially determined and reproduced in one way or another.

The artistic reproduction of nature and still life serve as a means of cognition of diverse social phenomena. Thus, to take the Dutch animalistic genre of the 17th century and in particular still lifes like Frans Snyders' "A Fruit Shop", "A

Grocery" and "A Fish Store". We see the countryside with its abundance of natural wealth needed by man and at the same time the relationships of purchase and sale peculiar to bourgeois society. If nature is depicted from the standpoint of a lofty progressive social and aesthetic ideal, a picture may serve as a means of education both of individual progressives and of whole classes in a spirit of love for the country, humanism and democratic ideas (landscape painting by Savrasov, Shishkin, Levitan and others in the 19th century).

The artists of socialist realism often depict nature from the standpoint of revolutionary, transforming and life-asserting principles (for instance, *Song of the Stormy Petrel* by Maxim Gorky and many landscape paintings by Soviet artists).

When a person is portrayed in art, his natural and social elements that are reflected are integrated in one single whole. This is explained by the fact that man is at once a natural and a social being. In contemporary society just as in all the others that preceded it, man the natural being has always been an essential element of man the social being. However, in the artistic images of different epochs the natural elements combine with the social, or concretely historical elements in different ratios.

In classical sculpture, for instance, the natural elements were brought out and emphasised. This was due to the natural connection formed between a free Greek and nature, and also to the poor level of technological development and the persistence of a mythological world outlook. Man was often shown naked, slender, physically well-developed and handsome. The ancient artist frequently sought to emphasise in man not so much how he was changed by social relationships

as what constitutes his essence as a creature of nature, opposed to all that distorts this essence. The anthropomorphic gods in ancient Greek mythology and art were to a large extent linked with particular natural forces (Zeus with the sky, Poseidon with the sea, etc.). For a Greek, external nature and man himself merged into a single whole.

Medieval art reflects more of man's connection with concrete social relations, although not usually directly but through religion, nature being regarded as a reflection of god. The medieval people portrayed in painting and sculpture of the feudal epoch as saints, monks and others, mirror the weakening of man's ties with nature. At the same time, they distinctly reflect the specific features of those dark times when everything natural, live and genuinely human was suppressed in man. Man was rarely shown naked and then only to reveal the traces of his bodily and spiritual sufferings (the crucified Christ) evidencing the cruel social relationships and contradictions, characteristic of the Middle Ages. The body was portrayed on a level plane, very conventionally and often deformed, this being a symbolic reflection of the deformed social relations of the times.

Nowadays, as never before, man acts as a social being, as a "sum total of social relations". The reasons are many, the chief being the complication of the entire gamut of social relations, the extenuation of class and party struggle and technological progress. Under capitalism, the masses are deformed both physically and spiritually. But their awareness and determination in the struggle against capitalism are increasing. All this, naturally, is reflected in a multifarious and complex way in all types and genres of art

which becomes thoroughly social, class and party-orientated (typical among others are the novels *Germinal* by Zola and *Mother* by Gorky and the plays *The Weavers* by Hauptmann, *The Enemies* by Gorky and drawings by Käthe Kollwitz). In Western modern art man as a natural harmonious entity is being relegated to the background. When he is treated it is not in the form of really existing people but as he was when he occupied a worthier place in art. Sometimes he is seen as an utopian image associated with a distant future age.

In the Soviet Union and other socialist countries engaged in communist and socialist construction, the image of the integrated, harmoniously developed man, who possesses the qualities of both a natural and a social being as well as advanced intellect and moral integrity, becomes an image of great educational value.

Modern progressive art is constantly broadening its sphere, making objects of artistic interest realms of nature and society which artists could not dream of not so long ago. Today all the earth, its seas and oceans, mountains and valleys, deserts and impenetrable forests, densely populated and scarcely populated localities have become the objects of artistic reproduction in literature, painting and the cinema. Nature in all latitudes and longitudes, at all seasons of the year and in all conditions have long invaded novels and poems, pictures and films. Moreover, our planet becomes an object of aesthetic perception as observed not only from its surface but from space by a freely flying person. Space itself, with freely soaring celestial bodies and artificial satellites, is becoming closer to man, once it is artistically interpreted and humanised to some extent.

Expansion into the natural sphere on an almost unlimited scale and its gradual humanisation in

modern progressive literature and art are closely associated with the equal expansion, in artistic work, of the social sphere which is of the greatest interest to man. Events of world-wide significance—proletarian revolutions which thoroughly transform the socio-political system of society, world wars which draw into their orbit many states and millions of people, the economic and cultural reforms in the newly independent countries, revolutions in science and technology brought about by the discovery of atomic power, and the development of electronics and cybernetics, all substantially change and enrich the possibilities of modern art and literature and make them truly universal compared with the art of the past.

All this makes necessary a re-examination of the essence and tasks, spheres and possibilities of literature and art. Today literature and art are changing from the science of man into a social science reflecting in artistic images the life both of individuals and groups of people and entire nations.

The cognitive role of literature and art is becoming more and more important while artistic form is becoming more intellectual and absorbing elements from publicism and science. Nature is depicted not only in its visible and invisible manifestations but also in the forms available to man only due to his ability to think in abstract (i.e., mathematical) terms and to complex instruments and appliances. The sphere of aesthetic reflection is extending in depth as well as in width. Not only the macroworld but also the micro-world are becoming the objects of artistic penetration as regards man and society as a whole.

But art is not only a reflection of nature and the life of society. It is also a force acting in its turn on nature and people. It is not merely a

question of every effect influencing its causes but reveals the purposes of the existence of art and literature.

As distinct from the old, basically contemplative materialism of the 18th and 19th centuries, which regarded art and literature chiefly as a mirror of reality, the contemporary materialism of Marx, Engels and Lenin regards it also as an instrument for remaking the world. It is important to emphasise here that man's consciousness in general not only reflects the world but also creates it. This creativity should not be treated idealistically, i.e., not in the sense of the spirit creating matter, but in the sense of the active intrusion of consciousness into reality, reshaping it according to man's interests and requirements.

Art, viewed in the broadest sense of the word, i.e., not only such traditional arts as literature, painting, sculpture, etc., but also modern decorative-cum-applied and industrial arts (design), actively intrudes into man's everyday life (production of articles for everyday use), into man's labour activities (in making machines and tools and in interior decorating), into the process of the exchange of foodstuffs and manufactured goods (advertising) and many other fields. The decorative-cum-applied and industrial arts, which combine beauty and utilitarian factors, mirror reality and create things which are not and cannot exist without man, are an extremely effective means of changing the world around man and of creating a universally organised medium, a purposeful and beautiful world, humanised and fitted to man's needs.

It stands to reason that changes in the material and aesthetic medium in which man lives do not involve changes in the essence of the relations peculiar to a particular society, say capitalism.

Changes in reality wrought by art are always limited and cannot be as effective as the revolutionary and critical activity of people ("criticism by arms") directed against outdated social orders and regulations. But this does not mean that the arts play a passive role in social life. The role of art and literature is active because they form human feelings and thoughts, rally people for certain activities and lead them towards certain ideals. In this sphere, too, art occupies an extremely important place as is borne out by the entire history of art and human society.

When the ideas spread by progressive literature and art are fully grasped by progressive people, they become a special material force which thoroughly transforms social reality. In this case the ideal becomes the motive force of the material, is turning into it, as it were, although ultimately the material remains the basis of the ideal. In this way literature and art reveal from a new angle their own property (essence) of objectivity and become a force (or one of the forces) developing material reality itself. Art and literature penetrate into the real process of social and natural development, undergoing changes under the impact of people armed with ideology, science and aesthetics. They are a part (or an aspect) of reality itself and universally impress themselves on the phenomena of nature and social life in the shape of objects, articles, buildings, monuments and of the people themselves educated by these works of art. The natural and social, the material and ideal are interacting aspects of reality. They have developed and will continue to develop in the endless advance of nature and the life of man and society as a whole.

ON THE SOCIAL NEED OF AESTHETIC EDUCATION

Aesthetic education nowadays is a field of intense battle for the minds and hearts of people. We have here a clash of two opposite and irreconcilable views on man.

In modern bourgeois society the aim of all forms of education is to establish individualism as an eternal immutable condition predicating man's primordial, "natural" hostility to society, his fight for a place under the sun, a fight in which the strongest, the "successful", win. Employing new methods and forms of influence on the masses, the upholders of the bourgeois world order galvanise the old alienation concept of the value of the human personality. By identifying this value with the real capital (the result of "success") which personality possesses, they try to condition the masses to accept the idea of its correctness and attractiveness as an ideal.

Quite a different concept prevails in the socialist countries. All media of ideological and educational work here serve to affirm the truth that man at bottom is not individualistic, but essentially collectivistic. He can and should live in a human manner—not to the prejudice of others, not benefiting by other people's sorrow and poverty, their suffering and ignorance, but in complete harmony with them in a happy collective where such a seemingly simple yet lofty principle as "one for all and all for one" operates.

A basic precondition for the triumph of this human principle is the expropriation of the expropriators, the abolition of private property,

which divides and estranges people. In applying this in the course of the socialist revolution, the communists have made an historically significant step towards the new world. Further progress in this direction is inconceivable unless the tremendous and extremely difficult task of educating the man of that world is tackled.

Lenin pointed out that all our educational work was rendered difficult by the fact that it had to be carried out with the human material which we had received from capitalist society and which had been brought up for thousands of years under conditions of exploitation of man by man. To awaken in man all that was good, benign and humane was a thousand times more difficult than perpetuating the brutal, individualistic qualities bred in him by the preceding social development of antagonistic socio-economic formations. The task of moulding the new man is to be handled by communist education. Its single aim is the harmonious all-round development of the human being.

Man's attitude to the new world, which is based on social practice and productive activity aimed at transforming that world, is infinitely varied. Society cannot exist unless it passes on to growing coming generations the productive experience it has achieved. This is the *aim of manual training*.

Every social system makes use also of physical education, which in all formations functions as a means of developing man's physical powers, as a means of forming and improving his skills.

Man asserts himself in the world not only in practical ways, but in spiritually theoretical ways, by cognising the laws of that world on the basis of practice in order to effectively and actively transform it on the strength of scientific data.

Scientific experience, theoretical achievements, which constitute society's real assets at every stage of its development, should also be passed on to the new generations. This task is accomplished by *scientific training, or instruction*.

We know that society could not have existed without regulative standards of conduct of the individual, having for him the significance of custom, force and habit. *Moral* (or *ethical*) education consolidates them, makes them natural and spontaneous to the individual, makes them the action of a free inner impulse, the prompting of a moral feeling. In ethical education the sphere of the feelings (emotions, motives, strivings, sympathies, etc.) is joined to the sphere of the rational. The nature of an individual's actions needful to the educator (to society, the class, their ideological apparatus) depends upon the degree of cultivation of these feelings.

The emotional world of the individual is not confined to a system of moral feelings. There is a specific field in it (without definite "geographical" boundaries, of course) in which the practical-utilitarian, the ethically-normative recedes into the background, appears not in its "pure" but in abstracted, mediated form, in which structurally complex *aesthetic experience* is dominant.

Its first, and seemingly, specific earmark, is absolute subjectivity, a peculiar intimacy, which does not bear any interference from outside, any "rules", and at the same time lays claim to universal significance. Formally, the anatomy of this experience was given by Kant, who emphasised its real structural features. Later arose the theoretical question of a possible purposeful influence on aesthetic experience, the elaboration of a system of aesthetic experience needful to the educator. In other words, the question as to the pos-

sibility of *aesthetic education*, which, in our view, should be interpreted only as a solution of the socially important problem of this system's establishment.

The paradox of aesthetic education was formulated long ago, namely, that everything which appears beautiful to the educator should appear so to every individual, should become an inner need of his, should give him free and intensive pleasure. In his heart of hearts, every thinking person regards this paradox as a glaring contradiction. Everything in it would seem to revolt against *diktat* in the sphere of taste, aesthetic emotions, ideas of beauty, etc.

Here, as in no other sphere of education, are needed tact, consideration of individual aesthetic needs and inclinations, and gentle, extremely delicate interference.

At the same time the social need for such *diktat* has been noted by philosophers and teachers since ancient times. Thus, Plato, in his Dialogue *Symposium*, says that love should teach one to be ashamed of the shameful, to strive towards the beautiful, since without this neither the state nor the individual is capable of performing any great or good deeds.

Once again, let us formulate the problem for clarity's sake: *the reality of the aim of aesthetic education depends directly on the interpretation of the plasticity of aesthetic experience as a special type of attitude of the subject towards the objective world.*

Today, in the new Soviet works on aesthetics, an attempt is being made to put over the idea of the fundamental significance of such a category as aesthetic experience for the construction of the monistic theory of aesthetic education as a system of active purposeful actions on man's entire intel-

lectual-emotional world, on the nature and culture of his aesthetic needs as stable phenomena of spiritual life.

The theories which interpret aesthetic experience as something immutable (fixed either by God or by human nature) consider such a task an absurdity, a logical contradiction. This view is shared by doctrines which, from passive contemplative positions recognise the shaping influence of environment on aesthetic reactions without understanding the active, practically effective nature of human cognition and without distinguishing between the subject and the object of such cognition.

They use the concept "aesthetic perception", which, of course, expresses only one side, one facet of such a complex psychic phenomenon as aesthetic experience. To recognise the "secondary qualities" of aesthetic experience, the effect on it of external factors reflected in it, is, of course, not enough. One must examine the dialectical relation between the object of aesthetic experience and its structure. Recognition of this relation should, in our opinion, be the starting-point for any serious philosophical analysis of the problem.

On very first scrutiny, aesthetic experience presents itself to the mind as a structurally complex phenomenon of spiritual life. Being an attitude, it is evoked and directed by a satisfied *need*, formed on the basis of all socio-historical practice, is actualised in specific *forms* and leads to definite intellectual-emotional results, and ultimately to *action*.

Satisfaction of an aesthetic need is the regulating factor which gives rise to aesthetic experience. Subjectively, this need is realised, or to be more exact, is felt, as a desire to enjoy the beau-

tiful in its diverse manifestations, from the simple gratification of feelings to the joy of creation.

As for the practice of aesthetic education it is important to bear in mind that there are two ways of influencing the spiritual world of the personality: through the formation of a need necessary to the educator towards the transformation of the character of aesthetic experience, and through a change in its structure towards the development of socially expedient individual needs. In both cases (which hardly exist in "pure" form) a correct scientific conception of the *structure* of such a complex phenomenon of spiritual life as aesthetic experience is of great importance.

In reality (and not in abstraction) aesthetic experience is an interrelation of different forms of man's aesthetic attitude to realities, such as *aesthetic emotions, tastes, ideals and impulses towards creative activity according to the laws of the beautiful*. It is their complex interlacing and interdependence that in every case yields the experience, which in ordinary speech is inaccurately named after its visible ultimate result—enjoyment.

An object of aesthetic experience is to be found, for example, in nature. There are no poetic epithets adequate to express the delight which is awakened in our soul by nature's forms—magnificent scenery and the loveliness of flowers, the colour symphony of minerals and butterflies, the perfection and grace of living organisms. And it has been truly observed that there is no person so unfortunate as not to have felt admiration at the sight of them, that is, not to have experienced aesthetic emotion. Quite a different matter is the degree of intensity of that experience, and still more, the extent to which it falls in with the interests of the educator. Bearing in mind that the *object* of aesthetic experience (and consequently,

the crux of it) is nature, which man transforms in the process of socio-historical practice, we know that this transforming activity can be used for the purpose of aesthetic education.

This possibility is predetermined by practice in regard to other spheres of aesthetic education as well. The reservation should be made that by *spheres of aesthetic education* we understand such aspects of objective reality and the results of human spiritual activity as may serve as objects of aesthetic experience. These are nature, man's varied social activities, the system of his relations with other people and the products of creative activity "according to the laws of the beautiful", one form of which—art—is specially orientated to satisfy the aesthetic need.

The system "need—experience—action", which we propose, helps to distinguish with theoretical accuracy the forms of aesthetic education according to the *types of action*.

The existing types of activity are: practical, socio-productive, spiritually practical, spiritual, or theoretical and play activities. In conformity with this we distinguish these *forms of aesthetic education*: organised work process; art and more broadly—all aesthetic activity; science and aesthetic education founded on it; and, finally, various forms of play activity, including sports. All these forms have a single aesthetic-educative aim, but go about it differently, according to its specificity. They form the groundwork for an integral system of aesthetic education, embracing all sides of life of the human being and helping to achieve harmony of his intellectual and emotional world.

And so we are able to regulate, on the basis of practice, the emotional-aesthetic attitude of man towards those spheres which supply the "building

material" for aesthetic experience, which determine the content of aesthetic emotions, tastes, ideals and impulses towards creation. Consequently, in point of principle, the task of changing this content in the direction desired by the educator *through a system of actions* is practicable.

We shall not get a full idea of the complexity and extreme delicacy of aesthetic education, however, unless we bear in mind that the content of aesthetic experience is predetermined not only objectively, that is, by the object, but also subjectively. For aesthetic experience is a remarkably pregnant, many-sided compound, a synthesis of the objective and the subjective, a synthesis of that which has been produced by objective reality which man is transforming and of that which depends upon man himself, upon his whole spiritual (political, moral, cultural, etc.) make-up.

Aesthetic experience is a special relation between subject and object, and as such it contains everything bearing on that relation. Both that which evokes experience in the form of aesthetic emotions, tastes, ideals and impulses towards creation, and the one who is subject to them are essential for the structure of this experience.

Thus, for example, admiration of craftsmanship, of a person's skill in producing something perfect, is an *aesthetic emotion*. This emotion may be aroused both by the greatest works of human genius, which stagger us by the titanic efforts of their creators, and by the simple display of ordinary human skill.

Does this mean that *everybody* experiences an emotion similar in intensity and drift when contemplating an act of skill or its concrete manifestations in the results of labour? Not at all! History is all too familiar with instances of a

disdainful attitude displayed by members of the idle and exploiting classes towards craftsmanship, which was the lot of slaves, of the "lower orders". Enjoyment mingled with grand contempt—is this aesthetic emotion not of a kind which depends entirely on historically predetermined qualities of the personality?

Still more obvious for the content of *aesthetic taste* is the significance of the qualities of personality, of that system of values which it realises by its being. In regarding man not only as a biological creature, but above all as a social creature, as a complexus of definite social relations, we define, as it were, the intricate structure of this subjective aspect of aesthetic taste.

The dependence of the content of aesthetic experience on the subject allows us to draw the conclusion that there are special methods of living influence. In other words, an organic interrelation is established between aesthetic education and other forms and types of education (political, ethical, scientific, etc.).

The first aspect of this relation is the aesthetic-educative effect which takes place in the process of carrying out other types of education. It appears in two variants—as one which the educator expects and is aware of, and as one that is collateral or incidental. The theory of aesthetic education must take both variants into account.

Adopting a simile, this aesthetic-educative effect may be compared to a concentration of rays in a single spectrum produced by numerous lenses designed to bring into focus other rays.

What, then, is the result of aesthetic education? In literature, the following answer has become typical and traditional: a change, an improvement, in all aesthetic experience, all emotions, tastes, ideals and creative impulses of the

personality. Indeed, such is the direct initial effect of the work of aesthetic education. It strikes the eye at once and lends itself most readily to objective investigation at different age levels. It is not only the teacher at a nursery school who has the satisfaction of noting how, as a result of her efforts, the spiritual world of the child changes before one's eyes, how its aesthetic emotions are developing from a simple sense of colour and form to complex reactions to the content of the object under appraisal. Equally effective is the work of improving the tastes of adults, the results of which may be studied by the method of concrete social research.

A direct effect, however, is not a final effect. Bearing in mind influence on the culture of aesthetic experience, on its orientation, the *final effect* will be found not in this culture, but in more profound changes in the personality make-up. The structure of aesthetic experience conditions a complex psychological feedback: by changing the nature of this experience we thereby influence such subjective factors as working practices, political views, moral notions, in short, the whole complex system of man's inner world. This confirms what we have postulated above—the non-identity of the tasks and results of aesthetic education.

Investigators and artists have long noticed that satisfaction of a need which occasions aesthetic experience has a wider effect (than an aesthetic effect). Strictly speaking, all theories which acknowledge the educative influence of art, the influence of the artistically beautiful on the moral world of the personality, etc., are based on recognition of this circumstance.

Aesthetic education in the Soviet Union pursues a single aim—the harmonious development of

the free individual of the new, communist world. In stressing this, we unequivocally determine the political angle of all aesthetic-educational work.

The development of the Soviet system of aesthetic education in the course of half a century of popular government provides examples of the use of this work for promoting the noble political aims of the Communist Party which have no precedent in history. It will not be an overstatement to say that for the first time all the resources of artistic culture were subordinated to these aims in a consistent and well-thought-out manner.

Initially, it was a matter of uprooting the reactionary traditions of the old world. Lenin repeatedly stressed the fact that this was a difficult and delicate business, which would take decades of sustained, systematic and purposeful effort. Simultaneously it was necessary to abolish illiteracy among the millions, make the rudiments of culture, science, and art available to them and create a proletarian culture evolving from the store of knowledge which mankind had accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, land-owner society and bureaucratic society. *In these conditions aesthetic education was geared to the task of general culture.* On achieving this, the Soviet Union passed to a new phase of its development, a characteristic feature of which was the achievement of a level of spiritual culture differing in many aspects from the preceding level. What had appeared at the outset to be a result, an ideal, now became a starting-point for further progress, the aim of which was a harmoniously developed man. The age-old dream of the world's noblest minds is now being realised with the aid of all media of education of the human personality.

Prominent among these is the place occupied by aesthetic education, whose field is steadily widening. While deepening the tasks of promoting general culture (Lenin's thesis that one can become a Communist only when one has enriched one's memory with all the wealth of knowledge mankind has evolved, holds good at all stages in the history of socialist society), this education is beginning to perform wider functions. Today all links in the system of aesthetic education are faced with a problem which life itself has raised: how and by what means, on the basis of what old and new methods can a person be taught not only to understand art, but become a connoisseur of beauty, capable of properly and emotionally reacting to it, to all its manifestations in art, daily life, and in the sphere of ethical relations, capable of being guided by a feeling for the beautiful in his everyday activities and consciously creating a new, free, truly human world.

CLASSICAL ART TODAY

"Classical art" is surely one of the few terms which are given the same definition in encyclopaedias the world over. However let us have it for the record that by classical art we mean not only the art of classical antiquity but "the art of the periods of ascendancy of the cultures of various peoples", and "works ... that have remained valid as masterpieces down to the present day".*

We shall not discuss contemporary classics here, firstly because they lie outside the scope of this paper, and secondly because works that are hailed as classics at the time they are written often prove to be of no interest whatsoever to later generations. This does not, of course, mean that values are not being created today which will become classics, but that choosing them is best left to the future when people will be able to see what has stood the test of time.

It is not my intention to examine innovations in the light of classical traditions, as the title may lead one to suppose. This subject was discussed in sufficient detail at the Fifth Congress on Aesthetics. The aim is rather to make a few remarks about the position of the classics as a whole in our time, a subject that merits our attention in view of the unprecedentedly complex and contradictory attitudes to the classics that prevail nowadays.

* *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia*, 2nd Russ. ed., Moscow, 1953, Vol. 21, p. 382.

Attitudes to the classics have varied from age to age. However, it can be said that the role of the classics increased as civilisation advanced and it was not merely a question of a quantitative increase, although this was an important factor. While Renaissance Europe was familiar with the art of classical antiquity and the works of earlier periods of European cultural development, the 18th and 19th centuries saw the enrichment of European culture by a great flood of Oriental classics. Along with the quantitative growth of the classics due to the development of civilisation and the accumulation of an artistic heritage goes a parallel growth of interest in it as a result of the development of culture and education in society.

One result of the progress of human culture was that artists ceased to look on the classics, even those of "golden ages", as a perfect model for imitation. While the classicists made no bold attempts to surpass the classics or make any original contribution to art, the romanticists, and especially the exponents of classical realism adopted a broader, freer approach. For them the classics was a school, but one where they could learn their craft and develop a mind of their own, learn to be independent and not merely slavish copyists. Though he learned a lot from the ancient Greek poets and the romantics, Pushkin nonetheless remained a highly original poet.

Attitudes to the classics depend not so much on similarity (or dissimilarity) of aesthetic ideals as on social conditions. Naturally, social conditions in the broadest sense of the word do not tell us the whole story: national traditions, social outlook and so on have also to be taken into account. Yet among the host of factors which cause changes in attitudes to the classics, social conditions are undoubtedly the decisive one, in-

cluding as they do both the economic and the cultural aspects. It is important to stress this, since we shall be dealing with an extremely contradictory attitude to the classics in our day and age.

In the 20th century two basic trends in attitudes to the classics have emerged. The first accords the classics the same high place they occupied in the past. It is not essential here to distinguish between those who consider them an infallible authority and slavishly copy them and those who adopt an eclectic approach.

The whole of society, and not only the world of art, is involved in this attempt to preserve the significance of the classics for human culture. Through its cultural institutions and their members, as well as through its artists society can either promote the spread of the classics or ignore and even scorn them.

The second trend basically involves denying the classics any significance whatsoever or distorting them for commercial or other mercenary motives.

Is this trend a new one or has it existed for a long time side by side with the former trend? The existence of the progressive and conservative trends in human culture is, of course, nothing new. The point is that contradiction between them has become especially sharp in the modern age. In socialist society which condemns outright the commercialisation of art, the classics command an unprecedented mass interest and profound professional approach, while in bourgeois society where art has been made a salable commodity a crude consumer attitude to the classics has developed. The danger for art lies in the fact that the latter practice has become so widespread, and there is hardly a masterpiece of world art nowadays (with the exception of architecture) which is not altered, adapted or somehow

tampered with, either for motives of profit or in an attempt to "get in on the sensation" the original caused.

The classics do not have an independent existence from the rest of art. Indeed, being a part of the arts, they share the general fate of the arts as a whole in a given age. Leaving aside the more general question, that of whether or not modern science and rapid technological progress favour the development of the arts, let us examine just one aspect, the influence of mass media on the classics. Mass media, and the appearance of new arts have created tremendous opportunities for transferring the classics from one medium to another. Radio, screen and television adaptations have given the old a new ring. But the new opportunities offered by mass media are not only being used for aesthetic purposes. Popular operatic areas are used in television advertising, and the heroes of classic works of literature have been made the heroes of sensational films and zany shows. Thus the paintings of Titian, Rubens and Renoir have been used as "props" in perfume or food advertisements. In short, the classics have been drawn into a sphere of social activity where they now fulfil an entirely new function. Typical of this function is that as a rule it lacks aesthetic content (advertisements) and that its motive is often not the achievement of a certain aesthetic result but simply undisguised profit-making.

There are other moral and psychological consequences of this. The new function produces new results and differences between the old, traditional functions of the classics and their new functions not only as regards form (in that they are not always intended to be approached as works of art), but also as regards their content (in that they often carry commercial or other in-

formation). In other words, the classics have been drawn into the sphere of activity that produces anti-social results. Whereas in the past the classics deserved the name thanks to the high aesthetic and ethical ideals they embodied and implanted in society, today they often serve a purpose quite opposed to their original one.

Needless to say, there is nothing in the works of Gogol, Hugo or Verdi that warrants their use in such a way as to be harmful to the aesthetic and moral development of society. It is a question of how they are "adapted".

Two main methods are adopted in using the classics for non-aesthetic motives.

The first is to leave the work itself untouched but to use it for non-artistic purposes, as in the use of tunes from classical music or masterpieces of painting and sculpture in advertising. The other is to adapt, often with radical alterations, the classic works (e.g., films "based on" books, like Roger Vadim's films).

However, in the majority of cases it is not the original classic masterpieces that are being circulated in the sphere of social relations but ersatz, fakes which due to ignorance, habit, or any of a variety of reasons, continue to be mistaken for the original. Thus a whining schizophrenic Hamlet is substituted for Hamlet the thinker and noble knight of chivalry and honour, and young people unfamiliar with the proper interpretation accept the former as the original. Commercial considerations have resulted in drastic simplification of the complex characters of popular literary heroes, the whole gamut of their feelings being reduced to one common denominator—sex.

Pocket editions giving abridged versions of the works of Tolstoi or Balzac are equally pernicious. All the artistry and feeling of the originals is lost

and the reader purely receives information, the bare bones without the flesh. There's a whale of a difference between a live animal and a stuffed one, but the unsophisticated reader is not always aware of this when it comes to literature. Many people, whose knowledge of Tolstoi or Dickens is confined entirely to abridged editions of their works, are convinced that they "know" the great writers.

The fact that mankind has a vast heritage of literary masterpieces worthy of everyone's attention is no justification for the practice of adapting the works to lighten the reader's task in getting to know them. Just as no description of Beethoven's music can possibly serve as a reasonable alternative to hearing it played, so it is impossible to retell a work by Shakespeare or Tolstoi in the space of a few pages and retain anything that bears any essential resemblance to the original.

Thus the "massisation" of classics does not raise so-called "popular art" to the level of the classics but, on the contrary, drags the classics down to the level of the murky stream of ersatz art.

The danger of this pernicious practice, due to the intrusion of business in art, lies in the moral harm it causes, since social evil is not given its true name and the base and ugly masquerade as the beautiful and exalted. Equally important, it has disastrous consequences for the classics, which are pushed into the background by the advancing tide of spurious works. The concepts of the tragic and comic, and of beauty and ugliness become confused, and what once appeared as tragic or beautiful in the classics no longer produces an appropriate aesthetic attitude in these works of "doctored" art.

It is, of course, impossible to calculate exactly the share of the classics in the influence art as

a whole has on forming the aesthetic tastes and moral norms of our contemporaries and on their cultural development in general. However, it is obvious that it is considerable, especially when it comes to widening people's aesthetic horizons and increasing their knowledge of the historical process. "We do not know the history of those ages about which no novels were written,"* wrote the Goncourt brothers. Though an exaggeration, this statement is basically true.

There is no compensating for the loss of this function of the classics, since rich in genres and themes though it be, modern art does not make up for the classics as regards form or content. No modern novel about the Trojan war, for example, no matter how authentic or how well written it may be, can possibly replace Homer's *Iliad*. Spectacular films freely based on Homer are even poorer substitutes for the original.

Exploitation of the classics for non-aesthetic purposes in some countries today has one result: form masking perfectly inappropriate content. Mass media spread not the original classics but surrogates, which is much the same as putting paper money into circulation in place of gold coins.

In short, the above circumstances have adverse effects both on the classics and on those who have to do with them or rather substitutes for them, i.e., society.

The classics suffer aesthetical damage. New works based on the classics have none of the artistic merits of the originals. The ideas are distorted, the events are interpreted differently, and the characters (Hamlet, Othello, Bezukhov, Madame Bovary and what have you) are deformed.

The damage to society is of a moral nature.

* Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Diaries*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1964, p. 48.

The authority, power and influence of the classics are exploited for the purpose of spreading ideas of a very doubtful nature.

Ultimately this is bound to result in a decline of culture. The mass "consumer" of art begins to look on the classics in very much the same way as he looks upon detective stories and sensational best-sellers and put Stendhal and Tolstoi on a level with paper-back hacks. Verdi and Bizet become "pop" composers. This cannot but leave its mark on creative activity. Artists crop up who specialise in adapting the classics to suit people with little or no taste. Whereas in the past the classics were there as a kind of antidote to the vulgarisation of taste, they can no longer fulfil that function in view of the alteration and debasement they themselves have undergone.

The mass of imitations of the classics confuses people so that they do not know where to look for genuine art, making it extremely difficult for them to approach the classics, since they have first to cut their way through layer after layer of rubbish. Thus, inexperienced people especially have a particularly hard time separating the flowers from the weeds. All kinds of difficulties may be encountered, from economic to psychological.

The economic difficulties arise from the fact that adaptations are often cheaper to produce than actual classics. The psychological difficulties concern mainly a question of the "consumer" of mass culture getting out of the habit of taking art seriously. The classics make him think and that requires a certain effort on his part. What he wants is spoon-feeding, pure entertainment without any effort. This mental laziness becomes a habit, and it is on the basis of this habit that aesthetic taste is formed.

Where is this process likely to lead, and is there any hope of stopping its doleful influence on culture?

For the moment, one thing at least is certain: isolated attempts to protect the classics from the incursions of people who have no business meddling in art have been unsuccessful in halting these trespassers.

Obviously, better artistic education is not enough to renew love for the classics. The factors that led to this sorry state in some countries are not of a purely spiritual nature, but include the sphere of material production, the political system and so on. Thus, the way out probably lies not so much through teaching people to admire the traditions of classical art as through radically changing society as a whole.

The fifty-year history of the Soviet state shows how the cultural-aesthetic and educational value of the classics can be enhanced, if society protects them from becoming subordinated to profit-making interests and safeguards them as artistic models. But this is not a question we can go into here.

However, it must be stressed that the classics represent the sum-total of all that is best in art. Thus its greatest treasures are a source of aesthetic pleasure, and a means of perceiving and studying reality, and must always remain a bastion of humanism. The attitude to the classics is an indication of the level of cultural development reached by a society. In this age of rapid industrialisation and technical progress which is leaving such a strong imprint on people we should strengthen and preserve that source of humanism and beauty—the classics.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF AESTHETIC
EDUCATION

The history of aesthetic thought and its present-day development advance a variety of concepts about the essence and significance of aesthetic education. The diversity and, sometimes, antipodal nature of these concepts are due to many social and epistemological factors. The latter, it seems to us, spring from the difficulties of understanding the substance of aesthetic education, which is dialectically contradictory.

In its most general shape aesthetic education may be regarded as giving man a definite aesthetic attitude to the world. In thus interpreting the nature of aesthetic education we find that it has two basic functions. One is that it forms in man a *definite, directed* attitude towards nature and social reality. This is achieved, primarily, by the fact that, to one extent or another, the individual acquires a conscious orientation in the world of aesthetic values. He grows accustomed to the aesthetic values formed in a definite social environment. From the standpoint of this social environment, the individual may be regarded as "aesthetically mature" if his aesthetic perception and experience of the beautiful and the ugly, the lofty and the base, the tragic and farcical conform to the notions formed in the given society about the nature of these aesthetic values.

Art is the major means of giving the individual his bearings amid aesthetic values because it mirrors the phenomena of life, aesthetically assessing them from the level of a definite ideal. In the

words of Aristotle, "the habit of feeling sad or gay in face of what imitates reality prompts us to experience the same feelings when we encounter [everyday] truth".*

There is, however, more to aesthetic education than this. It helps to form and develop man's aesthetic *attitude*, his aesthetic perception and emotions, his aesthetic tastes and ideal, and his ability to create aesthetic values in art as in any other sphere of work, life and behaviour.

Aesthetic education thus has two aspects forming the unity of opposites: it determines man's orientation in aesthetic values and develops his ability to create these values. This basic contradiction of aesthetic education is expressed differently under different social systems, and for that reason one or the other aspect of this contradiction can move to the forefront. In the history of ideas about aesthetic education we find two concepts, each founded on the absolutisation of one of these aspects. An example of this type of concept is Plato's theory about aesthetic education. Another example is Kant's aesthetic theory which gives prominence to the tasks of this education.

Of indisputable value is the fact that Plato attaches tremendous importance to aesthetic education and links it up with other forms of education. In his opinion "musical art cannot be appreciated without first assimilating the entire range of education".** His point of view is that aesthetic education influences man's personality as a whole and determines his moral consciousness. He was the first to raise the question that aesthetic education should be organised by the state.

* Aristotle, *Politics*, Moscow, 1911, Russ. ed., p. 366.

** Plato, *Laws, Creations*, Vol. XIII, 1923, Russ. ed., pp. 38-39.

However, the pattern of this organisation rests on Plato's teaching of beauty and on the social substance of his political ideal. Acting on the principle that "... most people are puppets and only slightly privy to truth",* the antique philosopher charts a system of aesthetic education that requires the strictest regulation of artistic work and expresses radical anti-democratism. Art is called upon to promote piety, fidelity to gods and, through this, to the system in the state sanctified by them. Inasmuch as the multitude cannot appreciate Beauty, the guidance of education through artistic means devolves on the ruling caste, which must expel from the ideal state "imitative" art—art that mirrors reality. Plato felt that man directly imitated what was portrayed and that art should not picture "anything that is immoral, disreputable, base or indecent".** Artists were required to deal with subjects that had a happy ending, with subjects in which virtue triumphed over vice. In order to serve as a medium of education art was prohibited from expressing grief or laughter. Music was confined to definite harmonies and rhythms, and even instruments. Expulsion was the most effective way of getting rid of those who refused to "create in a fitting manner". An interesting point is that Plato himself was well aware of the inevitable collision between the moral and aesthetic functions of the art propounded by him and consistently sacrificed the latter to the former: "Nobody will dare to laud a Muse that has not been approved by the guardians of the law even if he sings sweeter than Famir or Orpheus."***

* Plato, *Laws, Creations*, Vol. XIV, 1923, p. 23.

** Plato, *Politicus, Works*, Part III, Russ. ed., St. Petersburg, 1863, p. 172.

*** Plato, *Laws, Creations*, Vol. XIV, p. 53.

Thus, according to Plato, aesthetic education is wholly subordinated to moral education in a definite spirit, i.e., it does not pursue any aim other than that of directing the individual's orientation along the lines required by the given social system. The task of developing the creative potentialities of the individual could not even be raised by Plato because, in his view, art was a superhuman sphere. He was, perhaps, the first to give utterance to the idea that art, which mirrors life, moulds a versatile personality. That is precisely why this art was unacceptable for his ideal kingdom ("in our country a man is not a split personality, he does not engage in many things, but each does one thing").

Kant did not regard any judgement of tastes as being cognisable, but held that the foundation of aesthetic pleasure was a "free play" and harmony of man's cognisable abilities—intellect and imagination in judging beauty, intelligence and imagination in picturing something lofty.** Spontaneity in the action of cognisable abilities "helps the mind to comprehend moral feelings"***. The development of cognisable abilities and moral feelings, therefore, promotes an aesthetic perception of the world, while the culture of emotions is regarded by Kant as an introduction to any fine art. On the other hand, like science, fine arts make people more civilised and thereby prepare them "for a system in which only intelligence must reign supreme".****

Basing himself on Kant's aesthetic theory and

* Plato, *Politicus*, *Works*, Part III, p. 164.

** Immanuel Kant, *A Critique of the Ability to Judge*, *Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 5, Moscow, 1966, pp. 219, 264.

*** Ibid., p. 198.

**** Ibid., p. 467.

elaborating on it, Schiller regarded aesthetic education as the only means of restoring the integrity of the human personality, an integrity that had been lost in modern society. According to the aesthetic theory of the German poet and philosopher, art alone must reunite feeling and reason, enjoyment and work, effort and reward, and create an "aesthetic state".*

In both Kant and Schiller we thus find a concept of aesthetic education which accentuates the development, through art, of the higher spiritual capabilities of man and by means of this two major social problems are solved. Aesthetic utopianism of this kind, which regards art as the direct and sole vehicle of social reorganisation, manifests itself also in present-day Western aesthetic thinking (John Dewey, Morace Kallen, D. Hotshalk and others).

Marxist aesthetics holds that aesthetic education cannot substitute for the revolutionary transformation of social relations in which the alienation of man is predominant. But this education and its principal agent—art—can and must facilitate this social reorganisation through both their social functions: the formation of an orientation in aesthetic values and the development of the potential to create these values. It should be specially emphasised that the harmonious unity of these dialectically contradictory functions of aesthetic education is assumed.

The basic functions of aesthetic education clash when the aesthetic values in the spirit of which man is brought up express the interests of reactionary sections of society and are, therefore,

* Friedrich Schiller, *Essays on Aesthetics*, Moscow, Leningrad, 1935, Russ. ed., p. 291, *Letters on Aesthetic Education* (Letter No. 27).

essentially anti-humanistic. The fascist system of education, which sought to consolidate the "new order", of which the Oswiecim and Maidanek death camps were a part, can serve as a dismal example of the cultivation of "values" of this kind. It certainly does not require any development of human creative capabilities to see that these "values" are anti-humanistic. On the contrary, everything must be done to blunt them. It is possible, of course, even to preserve artistic education, but the outcome of this is brilliantly shown in an episode of the Polish film "The Passenger". This episode is based on documents: the staff of a concentration camp attend a Sunday concert of classical music given by prisoners condemned to death.

On the other hand, if the intention is to mould the individual in a spirit of genuine aesthetic values, i.e., values, which, in our opinion, express freedom and the free development of man and society, the above basic functions of aesthetic education will blend harmoniously. These genuine aesthetic values emerge in the process of people's creative activity in art and other spheres, and the perception of these values cannot be other than of a creative nature.

The basic functions of aesthetic education determine its place in social life. The aspect of this education which helps to give man his orientation in aesthetic values is directly linked up with the moral upbringing of the individual. We wholly subscribe to the tradition in aesthetic thinking which perceives unity between aesthetic and ethic values. The foundation for this unity is that both kinds of values ultimately facilitate social progress and the improvement of the human personality. Apart from its other qualities, beauty is, therefore, a wonderful regulator of relations be-

tween people, for without beauty these relations cannot be entirely human.

However, we are not in the least inclined to interpret the unity of moral and aesthetic education as meaning that they are identical. A man may be influenced morally without exerting an aesthetic influence. Moreover, a work irreproachable from the ethical-didactic standpoint does not necessarily have to be of great artistic value. And without belittling the ethical aspect of aesthetic education we cannot fail to see other aspects that are also socially important.

As we have already mentioned, one of the functions of aesthetic education is to promote the aesthetic-creative potential of the human personality. An integral aesthetic attitude to the world is also a creative attitude even when aesthetic values are not created but are only perceived. Aesthetic emotion consists of all the principal spiritual abilities of man: feeling, will-power, intellect and imagination. In Soviet aesthetics the well-argued theory was offered that man's aesthetic attitude, in particular the attitude concentrated in art, is a model of the creative process in general. Therefore, aesthetic education promotes all the spiritual abilities required in various fields of creative work. Can it be argued that the many hours that Albert Einstein spent playing the violin were stolen from science? According to the great physicist himself "there is always an element of poetry in scientific thinking. Genuine science and real music require the same process of thinking".*

Aesthetic education promotes creative activity

* D. Marianoff, *Einstein: An Intimate Study of a Great Man*, New York, 1944, p. 163.

in every sphere because it bares the aesthetic value of creative work that brings the greatest enjoyment, being a manifestation of all the finest human abilities, a remarkable force creating something new and unprecedented, and providing testimony of the power of man and his freedom. From the aesthetic point of view, creative work is self-growing beauty. The great significance of beauty, in particular, is that it is one of the cardinal spiritual stimuli of man's creative work, without which social progress cannot be achieved.

In the light of these arguments we cannot take a pessimistic view of the fate of artistic work in the epoch of rapid scientific and technological progress. At first glance it would seem that the cultivation of emotions obstructs clear thinking, and that the stern logic of science must paralyse the world of feelings. However, the development of the intellect in the process of gaining a scientific knowledge of the world beneficially influences the development of artistic culture. As the intellectual trend becomes increasingly more pronounced it enriches art, and this, in turn, makes greater demands of art as a means of filling the "emotional insufficiency" among the scientific and technical intelligentsia.* Technological development is itself governed by aesthetic laws, which gave rise to industrial art. In its turn, technology provides art with new means of expression.

* Indicative in this respect is the fact that in 1963 seven out of every ten season tickets to concerts of serious music in Moscow were held by people working in the sphere of natural and exact sciences; sociological studies likewise show that this section of the intelligentsia has, on the whole, a better artistic taste than any other.

The state of art in the Western world is, naturally, not idyllic but this is due not to the advancement of scientific knowledge but to a number of social factors, whose operation leads to what José Ortega y Gasset calls "dehumanisation of art". In a society where man is alienated, art itself, if it does nothing to oppose it, becomes one of the forms of this alienation.

There are many media of aesthetic education (everyday surroundings, daily work, the aesthetic aspect of moral relations, sports, and so forth) but art must be recognised as the main medium because the aesthetic attitude to the world concentrates and materialises in it. For that reason artistic education—cultivating the need for art, fostering the feeling for and understanding of art, and developing artistic talent—is part and parcel of aesthetic education. Man's perception of the aesthetic values of life is directed through the prism of art. By turning to art man enters the laboratory of creative activity. Being a creative reflection of reality, art embodies both the objective and subjective aspects of the aesthetic attitude and can, therefore, carry out both basic functions of aesthetic education—the orientative and the creative. Any rupture between these two basic functions is connected with a break in the harmony between the objective and the subjective, the cognitive and creative aspects of art itself. In this case artistic education clashes with the other elements of aesthetic education.

The social foundations for discrepancies between the basic functions of aesthetic education are antagonisms between personal interests and those of society, because in the case of personal interests importance attaches to the development of creative potentials, while in the case of the

interests of society it is important to give individuals an orientation in aesthetic values with the purpose of strengthening the social system.

The ideal of communism presupposes a "genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species".* In a society where "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all"**, no conflict can exist between the functions of aesthetic education. This education, which combines the moulding of the human personality in the spirit of genuine human aesthetic values with the development of the creative potential of each person, is necessary for the building of communism. The music of Shostakovich, the sculptures of Mukhina, the films of Eisenstein, the poetry of Mayakovsky and the plays of Brecht may be cited as some examples of artistic values that take part in the real process of aesthetic education in a socialist society building communism. Communism, state the founders of its scientific theory, means humanism,*** and all artistic values embodying humanist ideals—whether they are antique plastic art and tragedies or the creative work of Chaplin and Hemingway—participate in the aesthetic education of the builders of communism.

* K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, 1967, p. 95.

** K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1962, p. 54.

*** K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, 1967, p. 95.

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Inasmuch as man's aesthetic attitude to the world encompasses the entire range of his spiritual abilities, aesthetic education is an irreplaceable means of moulding the versatile, harmoniously developed individual of the bright future.

SOME SOCIAL ASPECTS AND TRADITIONS
OF SOVIET THEATRICAL ART

The history of the Russian theatre, the world theatre, and art in general is inseparable from the history of human society. The changeability of the form and content of stage art is directly connected with changes in the life of society and can only be explained by the peculiarities or character of the epoch in which they occurred. Whether an artist wants to or not, he always reflects directly or indirectly the times he lives in. Therefore, all real art is always modern. The deeper an artist explores life and the more vividly he portrays it, the more powerful will be the impact of his work. Of all the arts, however, it is the theatre which has the most direct impact, and has the closest links with the present-day life of the society it belongs to, for it exists exclusively for its contemporaries, it is an art that is performed right there, in front of the audience, it lives for just that moment and defies fixation: tomorrow, in front of another audience, it will be different again.

The Russian theatre, in the best periods of its history evinced the strongest affinity with the life of Russian society and the progressive ideas of the time. The distinctive, and universally recognised features of Russian classical art—literature, theatre, music, painting and sculpture—are its social content, sense of civic responsibility, its affinity to the most progressive ideas of the age, its responsiveness to the injustices and hardships of the time, and its irreconcilability to arbitrariness.

ness and violence, to the autocracy's spiritual and physical enslavement of the Russian people.

Under tsarism it was the theatre which served as the political tribune from which the most progressive ideas of the time were proclaimed, calls to struggle for freedom and a better future were sounded, and the existing order of things was criticised. Their ties of friendship with the finest members of the progressive intelligentsia, and their connection with the revolutionary democrats and the greatest writers of the epoch, had an enormous influence on the world outlook of the actors and producers, giving them a sense of personal involvement in the major problems of social life.

The great Russian actors, whose personal achievements were landmarks in the development of the national theatre, always held that the purpose of their art was to serve people.

The same democratic attitude—the urge to struggle against injustice and to believe in a better future for the people—permeated the passionately romantic acting of Pavel Mochalov, the realist art of Mikhail Shchepkin whose interpretations had the depth of social generalisation, the heroic pathos of Maria Yermolova, and the evocativeness of Vera Komissarzhevskaya's heroines.

It is this tradition of serving people, this awareness of its civic responsibility, and this spiritual closeness to its progressive contemporaries (together with the realist traditions of rendering the truth of life) that the Soviet theatre adopted from the old Russian theatre.

The October Socialist Revolution turned a new page in the history of human society and world culture. It made the boundary line between the old and the new in Russian literature and art,

and launched the development of the new, Soviet theatre.

The young Soviet state based its attitude to the role of the theatre in the life of the new society on Lenin's words about literature being a part of the "all-proletarian cause". Thus, the Government officially made the theatre the spokesman for the most progressive and just ideas of the age and announced its enlistment in the nation's great cause of building a new classless society and a happy future for the whole of mankind. The dream cherished by the great founders of the Russian theatre—from Gogol to Ostrovsky, and from Shchepkin to Stanislavsky—came true: the theatre became a truly *popular* form of art, authorised to serve the free people.

The Soviet theatre has inherited the old Russian theatre's humane, democratic ideals. But it had different aims to pursue and different tasks to perform. With the socialist revolution accomplished under the leadership of the Communist Party, and with the age-old dream of freedom realised at last, people became the makers of their own destiny and the ruling force of society. The object of the Soviet theatre, therefore, was to assert the new way of life and, in artistic form, promote communist ideals. The old Russian theatre, or rather the best in it, came out against the existing order, which was based on the oppression of the majority by the minority and was mainly a vehicle of protest and criticism.

The power of the Soviet theatre's impact on the audience lies in the fact that the subjective ambitions of Soviet playwrights coincide with the objective historical advances and with the main tendencies in the life of the country. Therefore, communist partisanship and nearness to the people are traits naturally cultivated by the Soviet

theatre. What Mikhail Sholokhov said at the Second Congress of Writers describes the position most aptly: "Our venom-spitting enemies abroad are fond of saying that we, Soviet authors, write at the bidding of the Party. Actually, each of us writes at the bidding of his heart, and our hearts belong to the Party and the people whom we serve with our art."

And because Soviet playwrights are communists at heart and in spirit their plays reflect the communist world outlook and are based on communist ideology, partisanship, and a conscious striving to assert the socialist ideal.

The interests of society and the personal interests of each artist coincide because their ultimate aim is one: to shape the character of people who are to live under communism, and give them a harmonious intellectual and moral development. Therefore, in stating his personal views, his attitude to an event or his opinion of a character, the Soviet artist expresses the views of the whole society; and in expressing social ideals, he voices his personal convictions.

But though the playwrights, producers and actors are united in ideology and world outlook, though they all follow the method of socialist realism, tackle the same tasks and pursue the same aims, they differ in their creative individualities and work in an infinite variety of styles.

It is typical for the present stage of the Soviet theatre's development to seek new and more perfect forms best capable of communicating the new content of our life today and presenting our contemporary's psychology and character in all its complexity.

To show how dissimilar our leading producers are in personality, manner and approach, we shall draw a few comparisons. The late Nikolai

Okhlopkov was noted for his frankly emotional, romantically uplifted, heroic style; for self-expression his art demanded space, mighty temperaments and titanic feelings. Contrarily, the productions of Mikhail Kedrov are profound psychological studies; he probes the "life of the spirit" and recreates it on the stage in vivid, eloquent forms. Nikolai Akimov's manner is ironical and elegant; he skillfully brings to light the comical in the different situations and in the actions of his characters. An enormous energy of thought seems to power the work of Georgi Tovstonogov who has a way of showing the very movement of history through his true-to-life characters. Yuri Lyubimov's productions are deliberately conventionalised; he uses the forms of popular tent shows and revives the traditions of the propaganda theatre of the first post-revolutionary years. Oleg Yefremov, a believer in psychological accuracy, manages to convey the finest shades of mood and reproduces the modern scene with great thought and care. These examples could be continued ad infinitum. Apart from the individual merits, qualities and genius of these producers, what really decides the worth of a modern Soviet producer and the value of his accomplishments is the degree of his closeness to the life of society and his ability to tackle the vital problems of the day.

Realism in the portrayal of human characters has always been the Soviet theatre's inalienable feature. Every new period in the life of Soviet society found its reflection in the theatre and left its imprint on the content and forms of this art. The rich historical experience of the country, blazing the trail to a better future for all mankind, was also the personal experience of the playwrights, producers and actors, and became

an integral part of the Soviet theatre. From the plays written and staged one can easily trace the development of the country, the Soviet society and the Soviet character.

Already in Mayakovsky's *Mystery-Bouffe*, staged soon after the Revolution by Meyerhold in a symbolic, tent-show style, the theatre tried to reflect the revolutionary sentiments of the masses, the revolutionary enthusiasm of Soviet society and its awareness of the historical justice it was doing under the leadership of the Bolshevik party by breaking up the old world and transforming it in a revolutionary way.

In the 1920s the questions which worried the new Soviet society—such as the problem of a man of “common stock”, as he would have been formerly classed, rising to leadership of the masses; the revolutionary readjustment of people's mentality; the intelligentsia's attitude to the Revolution—were raised in such plays as Bill-Belotserkovsky's *Storm* staged at the Moscow C.C.T.U. Theatre by Lyubimov-Lansky, K. Trenyov's *Lyubov Yarovaya* staged by A. Prozorovsky and S. Platon at the Maly Theatre, and *Armoured Train 14-69* at the Moscow Art Theatre in K. Stanislavsky's production. The main hero in these plays was a Communist, a fighter, a person who had fought for the Revolution, a whole-hearted champion of the ideas of socialism. Such were the people who, in the 1920s, assumed guidance of the country's political, economic and cultural life and who set the moral standards for all to emulate.

In the 1930s, when the fulfilment of the five-year plans became a matter of life or death for the state, and the nation began to build up a powerful heavy industry, the Soviet theatre extolled the labour heroism of the Soviet people, their

ability to place the interests of society above their own private ambitions, and their selfless devotion to the cause of communism, in such plays as N. Pogodin's *The Poem of the Hatchet* and *My Friend* staged by A. Popov at the Theatre of the Revolution.

These plays were innovational because the actions and deeds of their heroes were motivated by labour enthusiasm and professional interests. In the 1930s, when the first five-year plans were launched, the thrill of construction was indeed the prevailing emotion in the life of society, and this mood, embodied in scenic form, was evocatively rendered on the stage.

In 1941, when the nazi hordes perfidiously attacked the Soviet Union, the Soviet theatre enlisted for service in the Armed Forces, in the literal sense of the word. Hundreds of mobile theatres, formed of the best drama companies, went to the front lines and in battle conditions gave shows for the soldiers and officers.

The sharp changes wrought by the war in the peaceful life of the people were immediately reflected in the theatre. All their thoughts and feelings of those years of grim trials, their tragedies, their righteous wrath and their faith in victory, their heroic struggle at the front and selfless toil in the rear, were not simply the material for stage plays but the life of the theatre in wartime. And the people drew fortitude and energy from the theatre which strengthened them in their faith in ultimate victory.

Plays like Simonov's *The Russians*, Leonov's *Invasion* and Korneichuk's *Front*, which were shown throughout the country, did not simply tell the story of how the people rallied together to resist foreign invasion, of how strong they were in mind and spirit, and how each man was pre-

pared to die for the freedom and independence of his socialist Motherland. They actually disclosed the sources, the roots of this heroism, and showed that the victory of men, educated by the very pattern of Soviet life in a spirit of infinite devotion to the cause of Lenin, was a historical inevitability.

Alexander Korneichuk's *Front* (staged by the Moscow Art Theatre and the Vakhtangov Theatre, and scores of other theatres in the country) shows what an active role the theatre played in the life of society in wartime. This play actually helped to speed up the necessary reorganisation of the Army, resulting in the promotion of the more gifted and better educated officers to command posts in place of those commanders who, though honoured for past merits, were falling behind the times and refused to see that life and its demands had changed. The main theme of this play is that it is a man's abilities, character and personality which determine his value to society.

In this manner the theatre, living by the interests of the people and nourished by the people's thoughts and feelings, in its own turn exerted an influence on the course of the people's life.

In the 1950s, when the country was making great strides in economic and cultural development, a new generation entered the scene—they were young people who had not experienced the horrors of war and who knew of their fathers' labour and war exploits only from the stories of others. And once again, the Soviet theatre reacted like a sensitive barometer by staging Victor Rozov's plays *In Quest of Joy* and *Good Luck* which told of the new generation's hopes and seekings, and the young people's sense of responsibility to the memory of their fathers who had

died for their country's future. The plays spoke of the unity of different generations, of the continuity of inherited revolutionary traditions, and of the struggle between the new, communist features in Soviet society and all that is old and moribund.

The hero of Rozov's plays written in the 1950s is a young man of the post-war generation whose character is only just taking shape and who is trying to find his place in life. He is very vulnerable, extremely sensitive to injustice, full of lofty notions, and he will fight all that seems bad and wrong in life as passionately as he will defend all that is good in it.

The main quality of this popular Soviet playwright is his desire to give the young generation an answer to the questions which life poses before them, his keen and well-meaning concern for his young contemporary's inner world, and his striving to render in visual form the complex emotional and mental states of a young man, still unshaped in character, and "full of vague anxieties and clear romantic impulses", who gradually acquires a solid moral basis and an inner independence.

In the 1960s, the plays which best harmonise with the new processes taking place in the social consciousness of the Soviet people are, probably, S. Alyoshin's *Ward* and A. Arbuzov's *Irkutsk Story*, not to mention the latest from the pen of Victor Rozov. We find that the problem of the "hero" personifying the people engaged in building communism, is still in the centre of the playwrights' attention. But while in the 1920s and 1930s the inner world of this hero was revealed to us quite simply through his deeds alone, for he personified a man who brought revolutionary changes into the world by his actions, in the

1960s the hero's qualities are presented to us in a different aspect.

Take Sergei Seryogin from *Irkutsk Story*. He is a young worker who holds the ideals of communism as dear as did his predecessors—the main characters of the plays written in the 1930s or 1940s. But his inner world is more complex and has greater depth. Communist ideals have become an organic, inalienable part of his moral make-up, and they are the gauge of his moral purity and integrity. And now it is both his deeds and the strength of his personality, his model integrity that exert a decisive influence on the characters and destinies of the people surrounding him.

Immediately after the Revolution the Soviet theatre began to show that collectivism and the revolutionary consciousness of Soviet society, far from suppressing personality, levelling it, or obliterating creative individuality, on the contrary gave it every opportunity for self-expression, and that in a classless society it only helped to protect personality from destruction and encouraged its self-assertion. And so the growing interest in the moral side of life—a process which was so clearly evident in the social atmosphere of the last decades—found its reflection in that accumulator of social phenomena, an apparatus of such extreme importance in the life of society as the Soviet theatre.

The modern method is to reveal the true character of the nation in a psychological study of one scenic character, one single individual. In exploring his inner world, his personal understanding of the social processes, his personal feelings, passions and interests, the theatre finds the emotional links of that man with the life around him. Through the individuality of this one man

it expresses its social views and shows the moral attitudes of society as a whole. The theatre gives prominence to the feeling, common to all Soviet people, of personal involvement in everything that happens in the world, and even more so in the present and future of their own country.

Art must be useful and necessary to people—such is the task set before our theatre. That is why Soviet plays are optimistic, why they speak of humaneness, of people's solidarity, of human virtues and evil, of man's right to happiness, to a free life worthy of him, and of the individual's social responsibility.

The themes, characters and images presented in Soviet theatres are truly infinite in their variety. They stage the classics, the best plays of modern foreign playwrights, and Soviet plays which deal with the history of the Soviet state and the psychology of the modern man—a rank-and-file fighter for communism, the great common cause—by portraying his everyday and his aspirations, his sorrows and joys, and the struggle of the new and nascent in our society with the old and moribund.

The Soviet theatre's sense of civic responsibility, the lofty principles and partisanship of the playwrights, producers and actors, their personal involvement in the life of the country, the noble aims they pursue, the profound truthfulness and inspiration of their performances, and the adherence of the theatre to the most progressive movement of the age—the struggle for communism—have brought it world-wide recognition.

THE NON-INTERCHANGEABILITY OF THE ARTS

The modern system of the arts, the place occupied in it by the various forms of artistic creation, the birth of new arts, the relation between old and new arts (the theatre, cinema and television, for example) are all a reflection of the complexity and many-sidedness of human society and the aesthetic requirements of modern man. This system possesses a number of important features which, even a comparatively short time ago, were not so characteristic of the development of the arts. Two particularly strong tendencies have emerged, the first being a striving towards synthesis, and the second a tendency to preserve the specific nature of each separate art form. Both of these tendencies are fruitful ones. This dialectic contradiction does not lead to some art forms being absorbed by other, but rather to their mutual enrichment and a confirmation of the need for the existence of various forms of art, each enjoying full autonomy. One of the most important tasks in modern aesthetics is the study of the natural laws which underlie the division of art into separate forms.

The various art forms are the subdivisions of a single, social phenomenon. Each of them is related to art in its entirety just as the part is to the whole. At the same time, however, they are quite distinct from other types of the partial manifestation of general laws in art.

Such partial manifestations also include, for example, national features, the tendency for art to concentrate on a certain group of subjects in

any given historical period, and the artist's individual style. Partial features of this kind are liable to change and be replaced by others.

This is not the case, however, with the specific characteristics of the various art forms. Although artistic images vary in their specific features according to the medium in which they appear, the specific characteristics of the media themselves remain constant. The properties of the art form vary, naturally enough, according to the period and are given concrete, historical manifestation in different artistic cultures. But they are not determined by the artist's individual style or by national features. The specific characteristics of the various art forms are present in all their concrete manifestations. In each of these manifestations they reflect the specific nature of the given art form. They correspond to the very nature of art itself.

It is common knowledge that the question of the division of art into different forms has been a subject for study ever since antiquity. The answers which aestheticians and artists have given to this question are extremely diverse. In spite of this, however, all these answers may generally be reduced to two basic ones: some aestheticians explain the existence of different art forms by objective causes and others by subjective.

Adherents to the first point of view hold that art splits itself up into separate forms because the many-sidedness of art itself demands different means of artistic expression. Those who favour the second view believe that since the same phenomena are frequently reflected in poetry, music and painting, there are no grounds for explaining the existence of different art forms in terms of the objects they reflect. The reasons for

the existence of these different forms, they hold, should be sought in the subjective peculiarities of human perception, especially the various sense organs of the artist. Thus, the origin and development of painting is explained by the existence of the eye, music by the ear, and so on.

It would be incorrect to equate an acceptance of the objective or subjective factors with a materialistic or idealistic solution of this problem. Suffice it to say that both the viewpoints referred to above have drawn their supporters from the ranks of materialists and idealists alike. The objective basis of the division was accepted by both Lessing with his materialistic view of aesthetics, and the idealist Hegel, whereas the subjective basis has been defended by the realist aesthetics of Leonardo da Vinci and the subjective, idealist aesthetics of Kant.

In examining the reasons for the existence of different forms of art, we must guard against confusing the objective bases of the division of art with the subjective factor, namely, the peculiarities of human perception.

Whilst acknowledging the decisive role played by the objective factor in the division of artistic culture into different arts, we should not ignore the significance of the subjective factor in this respect. The language of colours, lines, sounds, etc., which art uses, did not arise simply because colours, lines and sounds exist in the real world. This language arose because colours, sounds, shapes and so on had assumed a special significance in people's lives and had acquired an expressive meaning. The human eye and ear perceive colours and sounds differently from the eye and ear of an animal. Man's five senses are the product of human history. That is to say, the character and peculiarities of human perception have

been formed to meet social and historical requirements. These peculiarities have a most important influence on forms of reflecting reality in man's consciousness and, consequently, also determine to a certain extent the intrinsic nature of the different art forms. These forms differ from each other both in that they reflect different phenomena and that they use different representational methods also corresponding to the nature of human perception. But the fundamental explanation of the existence of different art forms is, undoubtedly, to be found in art itself, in the many-sidedness of the objective world which cannot be revealed through any one form of art.

It might be objected that the same manifestations of life are frequently reproduced by different art forms. This is quite true. *Ruslan and Ludmila* appears in both literary and musical form. And *Quiet Flows the Don*, *Virgin Soil Upturned* and *The Fate of a Man* are literary works, but the events on which Sholokhov's works are based have also served as the basis for films, operas and plays of the same name. "The Demon" is not only a poem by Lermontov, but also an opera by Rubinstein and a painting by Vrubel. The history of art contains a multitude of examples such as these.

These facts, however, do not prove that the subject matter of all forms of art is one and the same. Different art forms may portray the same manifestations of life, but in so doing each of them is primarily concerned with those aspects of these manifestations which cannot be expressed with sufficient clarity by other art forms. Of course, it is possible to establish a link between all the arts, but it is equally important to observe the demarcation between them. Goethe called

architecture a realm of petrified sounds. Like Schlegel he thought it possible to see architecture as music in stone. In so doing he was emphasising the link between these two art forms, but no one would assert that the only difference between architecture and music lies in their methods of representation. How right the musicians are who say that if everything in the world could be explained in words there would be no need for music.

The whole history of art in the various stages of its development and in all its forms confirms the existence of these natural laws. Thus, in the 19th century the Russian painter Ivan Kramskoi wrote: "A person with any sense knows very well that there are things which words simply cannot express. He knows that in moments like this it is facial expression that comes to his aid—otherwise painting would not exist."^{*} The talented producer Walther Felsenstein, artistic director of the German Musical Theatre "Komi-scher Oper", insists that a singer should sing "not because he has a good voice and has been trained as a singer, but because he feels the need to sing in his dramatic situation. This means that he must be emotionally convinced that he has no means of expression at his command other than singing".^{**}

In other words when the various arts turn to one and the same manifestation they do not, of necessity, reflect the same aspect of it. For further confirmation of this profound truth let us look to the facts of art itself.

^{*} "I. N. Kramskoi's Letters", Iskusstvo Publishers, Moscow, Vol. II, 1954, p. 129.

^{**} Walther Felsenstein, "The Realism of the Musical Theatre", *Izvestia*, July 19, 1965.

G. Jokubonis' statue "Mother Pirciupis", J. Marcinkevicius' poem "Blood and Ashes" and K. Morkunas' stained-glass panels "Pirciupis" are all based on the same material. In June 1944 the Lithuanian village of Pirciupis suffered the same fate as that of the Czech village of Lidice before it, and the small French town of Oradour-sur-Glane after it—the Germans burnt it down together with all its inhabitants, men, women and children. The ashes of Pirciupis, like those of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, pluck at the very heart-strings of humanity, and this is the subject of the three works in question. At the same time, each of them has tackled different aspects of this terrible tragedy. In complete conformity with the nature of the art of sculpture, G. Jokubonis' splendid work is a generalised expression of tragedy and courage. His "Mother", to quote the sculptor himself, is "a symbol of the Motherland grieving over her lost sons". This is a truly monumental work (not because of its external effect or simply because of the genre, but because of the profundity of thought and feeling). It contains unquenchable pain, the majesty of the human spirit, hatred of the executioners and the warning that this must not happen again!

The tragedy of Pirciupis is rendered with remarkable expressiveness in K. Morkunas' stained-glass panels of the same name. But stained-glass is not sculpture, although they have common ground—symbolisation, generalisation and laconicism. The artist concentrates one's attention on the way in which people reveal themselves in critical, decisive moments of their life and the life of their country. Here again the same idea is expressed, namely, that mankind cannot tolerate inhumanity and that we can know no peace as

long as the heirs of Pirciupis' executioners are alive.

J. Marcinkevicius' heroic poem contains the same pathos as the works of Jokubonis and Mor-kunas. "Blood and ashes are the fundamental problem of our age," wrote the poet. "No living soul can turn a deaf ear to the warning of Buchenwald.... This is not an analysis of that which has been and gone, but one of the most urgent problems of today." But "Blood and Ashes" is not a literary version of the answers produced by the other art forms using other methods. Marcinkevicius' poem also reflects certain aspects which are outside the scope of sculpture and stained-glass panels. The portrayal of the broad canvas of the life of the people, an artistic examination of its sources, the *course* and consequences of a dramatic period of history; a portrayal of the different aspects of human relations; the depicting of *various* types of characters, people who show indomitable courage in the struggle against the enemy, those poor in spirit who did their best to avoid the trial by blood, and those who simply betrayed their country, etc.,—all these are magnificently embodied in this literary work.

Each form of art aims primarily at reflecting a certain range of manifestations of life or certain aspects of these manifestations. Accordingly each of them uses its own representational and expressive methods, and it is at this point that the essential demarcations between the different forms become evident. But the actual artistic methods employed are determined first and foremost by the object being reproduced and the aim which each form sets itself.

The synthetic arts of the theatre and cinema are able to use the representational and expres-

sive methods of all the arts. And theatre and cinema do, in fact, make wide use of the representational methods of architecture, painting, music and dancing. Each of these arts, however, has its own special methods of creating the artistic image.

Thus, rhythm is an important artistic means for both stage and screen, but in each of these arts it takes on a different form. Action in the cinema develops differently from action in the theatre. A play lasts three or four hours, and no one is ever tired or bored if it is a good one. But the same play turned, just as it is, into a film and shown on the screen will bore and irritate the audience. However, a film which is based on a play with a specially written scenario may be a true work of art. There are, of course, many reasons for this, of which the different rhythms of the theatre and cinema is only one.

However specific are the representational and expressive methods of the individual art forms, there is a definite link between them. This is seen not only in the fact that all artistic representational and expressive methods are subject to certain general laws, but also in the fact that this or that art form may in certain circumstances use the representational methods of other forms of art. Thus, for example, the line is specific to drawing, but in certain cases drawing also makes use of colour, a means which it borrows from painting. This sometimes enriches drawing, extending the scope of its representational possibilities. Choreography, the art of plastic movement, makes use of the plastic means of sculpture. It is, consequently, quite understandable why the artist is constantly interested in representational and expressive means of art forms other than his own. Sergei Konenkov advises the sculptor

not merely to know how the bones of the human skeleton are joined together, but to study the movement of the human heart to the same extent as the writer has to be able see the world in plastic terms.

This mutual enrichment of the arts can be, and often is, extremely fruitful, but it has its limits. Whilst pointing out that painting, plastic art and mime are very close to one another, Goethe warned the artist working in these media to remember that the other art form could do him harm as well as good. "A sculptor," he wrote, "may be led astray by a painter, a painter by a mimic, and all three of them may confuse each other to such an extent that in the end not one of them will be able to keep his feet."*

This was a very wise warning, particular for the artist who is working in the synthetic arts.

For the purpose of making the subject matter and emotional appeal of a play more powerful the art of drama makes lavish uses of the representational means of all the other media, which is not always justified. In recent years it has become common practice for theatres to have recourse to cinematic devices: titles appear on the stage, use is made of so-called "internal monologues," recordings of voices which are played with the actors silent upon the stage, rapid changes of scene, cinematographic rhythm, etc. Sometimes these devices are used successfully, but for the most part this is not the case. Something that sounds good in the cinema is quite often no good in a play. Devices that are quite appropriate in the cinema sometimes hinder concentration in the theatre, preventing one's imagination and

* J. W. Goethe, *Essays and Reflections on Art*, Russ. ed., Moscow, Leningrad, 1936, p. 327.

thoughts from having free rein. The representational means of the other artistic media can and should be used taking into account the specific nature of each of the given media so that one is not substituted for the other.

Thus it may be seen that the need for the existence of various artistic media arises from the fact that no single one of them is capable of giving a sufficiently complete artistic picture of the world with its own method. Such a picture can be provided only by all the different media taken together, by the artistic culture of mankind as a whole.

Each form of art possesses its own advantages over the other forms in the portrayal of certain aspects of life from its own, distinctive, viewpoint. For example, no other art can convey the riot of colour in nature with such artistic force as painting. But with all its emotionality, painting takes second place to music as far as the direct expression of human feelings and emotions is concerned. However broad the scope of literature, it cannot give the visual picture of the events which it describes that one of the representational arts could. However powerful the spoken word, it cannot achieve the same effects as mime, and there are times when a live actor on the stage is incapable of conveying to the audience certain manifestations of life which can be portrayed in a puppet theatre. If poetry were capable of producing the same effects as music, choreography the same as painting, and the representational arts the same as literature, there would be no need for different art forms.

But although each individual art form possesses certain advantages over the others, none of them can boast of superior ability in the matter of penetrating phenomena and revealing their

essence. It follows that attempts to compare and contrast certain art forms are both fruitless and fundamentally wrong. Does not the development of photography as an art make realistic painting superfluous? Is easel painting dying out and being replaced by monumental painting? Is not the theatre as an art of the past being replaced by the cinema, with which it cannot compete?

We consider such contentions to be false for a number of reasons. The cinema cannot take the place of the theatre, just as the theatre cannot replace the cinema. In spite of their similarities they are two different visual arts capable of enriching one another, but dealing with different artistic problems. Without drawing any analogy between the cinema and photography, however, it is possible to say that the cinema cannot take the place of the theatre just as photography cannot replace painting. The cinema, in contrast to the theatre, possesses an enormous range of representational possibilities, but, as has already been mentioned, these possibilities are not always needed by the theatre; more often than not they do not benefit the theatre and add nothing to its spectrum. The modern theatre frequently uses cinematic devices, but not as a substitute for its own artistic language. The theatre and cinema are not dealing with the same artistic problems and do not possess the same means of expression.

Preserving the sovereignty of each separate art form does not mean that its characteristics are absolutely immutable. These are liable to certain transformations in the course of social development and the development of the art form itself. The shape of artistic thought also changes in certain respects. Thus, the language of the modern theatre is no longer that of even a com-

paratively short time ago, and the imagery of realistic painting of the present day is different from that of half a century ago. But however far-reaching these transformations may be, individual art forms cannot replace each other, just as science and art cannot.

The development of art is uneven, because, as Marx pointed out, it does not always correspond directly to the development of society. Economic progress is not always accompanied by progress in the artistic development of mankind. Thus, unique art treasures belonging to antiquity or the Renaissance are incomparably superior to most of the artistic products of our age, although the age of antiquity and the Renaissance cannot bear comparison with present-day society as far as the level of economic development is concerned. The uneven development of art is also reflected in the fact that in different ages the individual art forms themselves develop at different rates. In ancient Greece it was architecture and sculpture that reached their peak, in the age of the Renaissance it was painting and in the 19th century literature. In each age the single art form predominated which gave most complete expression to the artistic requirements of its time, and it had a decisive influence on the other forms. It was Russian realist literature that paved the way for the painting of the *Peredvizhniki** and the music of the *Kuchkisty***. The noble ideas of civic duty and serving the people, the principles of national character and realism on which Russian literature of the 19th century was based, made it the mentor of all the arts of that time.

* Society of Travelling Art Exhibitions (1870-1923).

** "The Great Five"—Russian composers Borodin, Balakirev, Kui, Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov.

The uneven development of art is also evident in the fact that in the present day certain art forms are ascribed more importance marking them out from the rest. Many consider that the cinema is the leading art form of the present day. In our opinion it is literature that occupies pride of place in the 20th century. It has the greatest scope for artistic comprehension and expression of our age. But the balanced development of the personality demands a balanced satisfying of all its artistic requirements which can be achieved only by all the arts as a whole. The different forms of art are not interchangeable.

ON THE PROBLEM OF "MASS ART"

In England and a few other countries there is a sign at each crossroads that says "Keep left". It is unlikely, however, that anyone would consider English traffic regulations to be more up-to-date, although the traffic does, in fact, drive on the left side of the road.

But joking apart, it is a fact that the word "left" can by no means always be equated with that which is progressive, either literally or figuratively. Ever since the end of the last century the various brands of formalism in art have been accompanied by a host of slogans and banners containing the magical word "left". Exponents and admirers of contemporary neo-modernist music, art and theatre pour scorn on anyone who dares to question the "leftness" of their works. And the founder of "pop art", Robert Rauschenberg, and its other pioneers would consider such criticism as an insult.

There is little to recommend this or that formalistic "ism" apart from the desire for something new and fashionable. And the criterion of fashion is an extremely dubious one, open to dispute and unscientific, to say the least.

The flourishing in the West of so-called mass culture appears, at first glance, to be a different matter, founded as it is on more scientific and seemingly progressive, aesthetic principles, such as all types of technological progress, and rapid advances in means of communication and the dissemination of information.

Any attempt to equate "mass culture" with

modernist art would appear to be unjustified, even paradoxical. The levelling-out of taste implied by the former would seem to be poles apart from the deliberate refinement and abstraction accessible only to the élite, with which modernism is associated. In fact, however, these two phenomena are closely linked up with each other, both internally and externally.

Externally, this connection is to be found in the fact that the West's "cultural industry" makes, for example, abstract works of art available to the public at large. The "average" consumer in present-day bourgeois society is more capable of responding to bright blobs of colour and serial music, demanding no mental or spiritual effort on his part, than he is to the works of Anton Refregier and Rockwell Kent or the symphonies of Beethoven and Shostakovich. The "average" man in bourgeois society today sees art primarily as something based on suggestion. This is basically the art of the advertising fetish. Of course, it does not always take the form of a commercial advertisement by any means. The interrelation of "mass culture" and modernist art is gradually beginning to exert a unified, complex, ideological influence on people's minds.

As far as the internal connection is concerned, the purely formalistic content of "mass culture" aesthetics has long since been established. As early as 1949 the famous Soviet film director, Vsevolod Pudovkin, emphasised that formalism should not be regarded as an isolated, unimportant trend, such as cubism, expressionism, futurism and all the other countless "isms". "Formalism," he said, "is a broad concept covering everything which makes the artist turn his back on real life and its demands. . . . Take a film on a great historical subject, for example. A formalist approach will

allow the director to ignore the actual events and concentrate on spectacular ritual, rather than revealing the true historical import of the subject. It will pack the film with love scenes and funny stories for the pure entertainment of the audience, without teaching them anything. It will have at its disposal the whole box of dramatic tricks so popular with the Americans in the production of the dangerous rubbish which they call 'historical epics'."

Pudovkin used the word "dangerous" with good cause. As well as the direct intention of distracting audiences with cheap thrills, Hollywood films almost invariably contain an ideological message: the preaching of individualism and an idealistic interpretation of history and society, or the corrupt cult of money, sex and violence.

All modern "mass culture" has its aesthetic roots in Hollywood. It was there that the foundations were laid, economic, organisational, ideological. There, too, advertising propaganda first took shape. Almost from the very beginning Hollywood stood apart from the cinematic and other arts of the rest of the world, using all the means at its disposal to supplant the creative encounter of rival talents by cut-throat commercial competition. A few outstanding figures succeeded in resisting this pressure, but their work went beyond the accepted written and unwritten laws of their time, the period after the First World War. Meanwhile the general trend became stronger and increasingly widespread. Hollywood's mass, commercial productions soon became synonymous with cheap, bad taste. But the profits which they brought in guaranteed large-scale distribution not only of the films themselves, but also of the Hollywood ethos which was taken over by the countries of Western Europe one after another.

The big bosses of the film industry in the West use every available means of propaganda to create a cinema of entertainment, at the same time excluding from the circuits all films attempting a serious study of man and society. Their favourite justification of this may be expressed as follows: people are happy if they can get "compensation" for their dreary lives, even on the screen.

In his book *The Mature Mind* the American journalist, Overstreet wrote that the cinema tycoons had realised "that the sure-fire way to attract people... is to give them compensatory illusions. Motion pictures became the big business through which unsatisfied men, women, and adolescents in unprecedented numbers were granted a day-dream fulfilment of their hopes. The motion picture did not aim to make these unsatisfied people go forth and take positive action to solve their own problems. It aimed to give a dream that was in comparison with reality that they would return, and return again, for further hours of dreaming. So fixed has this money-making formula become that even novels and dramas of stature and integrity come out of the movie-mill something other than they were: they come out revised to fit the day-dreams of the unsatisfied immature".*

It would be naive to deny the importance of the so-called "cinema of entertainment" in the current ideological struggle. The "wonderful sensation of freedom" from reality, which they evoke and which is a favourite topic of conversation among their followers, is usually far from "wonderful" in essence. Even the authors of the official brochure *Motion Pictures of the U.S.A.* pub-

* H. A. Overstreet, *The Mature Mind*, N. Y., 1949, pp. 220-21.

lished in 1958 by the Motion Picture Association of America and the Association of Motion Picture Producers, were forced to admit that: "... films, under the cloak of entertainment, can be used as a force for good or a force for evil. ..."

Can be! And what of Hollywood's massive output? The writers of the brochure themselves supply an indirect answer to this question: "The role of U.S. films *as emissaries of our society* (my italics—A.K.) has been cited many times by top-ranking U.S. statesmen. Typical is the following statement from Stanton Griffis, who, since World War II, served as U.S. Ambassador to four countries. 'You cannot realise how important I found films in my work. I make no bones about saying that I have on many occasions accomplished more good with American pictures than with all the formal activities and paraphernalia of official diplomacy.'"^{*}

Without wishing to do so, the writers of the brochure are giving the lie to their own assertions that "there are no sermonising or preachments" in Hollywood productions and that in them "the accent is on entertainment". The true role of this "dream factory" is that of proclaiming the American way of life.

This is not to say, however, that all films of entertainment are necessarily harmful. The need for a cinema of entertainment as a means of relaxation is universal. After all, serious, classical literature exists alongside with light fiction. We can and should give the cinema's "light fiction" its rightful place, approaching it without preju-

^{*} *Motion Pictures of the U.S.A.* Issued by the Motion Picture Association of America and International Committee of the Association of Motion Picture Producers, Hollywood, 1958, pp. 13, 28.

dice and applying the correct criteria. At their best these films make a positive aesthetic contribution, as well as entertaining, and add to the spectator's store of knowledge, insofar as they, too, reflect reality in their own individual way. Such films, however, are rare exceptions in the commercial cinema.

Since commercial production aims among other things at gaining maximum profit and satisfying "all tastes" it is the enemy of all true innovation. Deprived of nourishment from real life in all its rich manifestations, it relies on a limited number of stale themes and situations. "Passionate love" and sex, thrills and reckless gaiety, the "discoveries" of the cinema in its earliest days, which were borrowed for the most part from cheap literature, have always been the mainstay of the commercial cinema.

All the foregoing may be applied, with minor reservations, to practically any sphere of Western culture in the present day. Literature, the press, art reproductions, music and so on have all fallen victims to "Hollywoodisation". One of the fathers of modern radio, Lee de Forest recently exclaimed sadly: "This child of mine, now thirty years in age, has been resolutely kept to the average intelligence of thirteen years."^{*}

The actual term "mass media" did not come into use until the appearance of television, but the problem of "mass culture" has existed for more than a mere twenty years or so. The attitude towards it in the Soviet Union has long been uncompromisingly negative. As in the case of other countries with progressive social systems, the Soviet Union does not allow commercial com-

* V. J. Jerome, *Culture in a Changing World. A Marxist Approach*, New York, 1947, p. 30.

petition but preserves and encourages creative competition. In the Soviet Union there is culture for the masses, created by the masses, but no standardised culture directed against the masses in the interests of a financial, technocratic, scheming élite.

The very chronicle of the brief, but stormy history of Western "mass culture" is an eloquent witness to its militant conservatism, symbolised in Hollywood. But the principles of the parasitic relationship of "mass culture" to scientific and technological advances extend to all spheres without exception. And here yet another symbol inevitably comes to mind, which gives equally succinct expression to the nature of these relationships.

While pioneers in the field of medicine, such as the man who discovered penicillin, Alexander Fleming, were sitting up all night in their laboratories working on new drugs which were to save the lives of millions of people, they could never have dreamed that their discoveries would fall into the hands of ruthless businessmen, who were to flood the market with patented medicines causing babies to be born deformed, with one eye or with no arms, medicines offered to the unsuspecting public through hypnotically persuasive advertisements.

The businessmen of the "mass media" are also engaged in the equally pernicious and hideous process of deforming social consciousness. Here pride of place must go to television which has broken all records. It is, perhaps, this medium which illustrates most forcefully the lengths to which "spiritual" commerce will go. It is determined to sell off its product at any cost, even the corruption of man. Among the multitude of angry protests which can be heard today all over the

world, an article published in the *New York Times* in December 1966 is worthy of special attention. Its author is the well-known psychiatrist, Fredric Wertham who demonstrates convincingly that with all its excellent technical equipment American television is oozing blood. Wertham is talking about the war in Vietnam which is often called the first "television war" in the United States, where documentary film is twisted into false information and American aggression becomes a common sight, just another "show". The shooting of patriots, the punitive operations against the South Vietnamese peasants and the bombing of peaceful towns in North Vietnam are turned into entertainment.

With regard to the reaction of the American public to these programmes, Fredric Wertham firmly rejects the point of view that constant presentation of the war on television is a kind of electronic passivism. These daily transmissions of the horrors of battle, which can be viewed from the armchair simply do not convince people that war is the most unreasonable way of settling disputes. "My observations are different," writes Wertham. "They are based on the reactions of teenagers in individual and group sessions, when discussing war and its representation on the screen. I have also studied adult audiences. The conclusion became inescapable that if you want to condition people to accept war and violence, the present TV treatment is excellent. Our channels of communication are hardening us to war rather than educating us against it....

"The effect of the war films cannot be evaluated in isolation. They hit a generation well prepared. No generation growing up in any epoch of history or in any place has had to face such a deluge of violence as modern American youth, now

old enough to make history itself. The deluge begins in the nursery with the 'kill toys'—as the children call them—guns and elaborate warfare weapons advertised as suitable for even the pre-school child. These toys teach that it is fun to play killing and that war is a good thing.

"The education progresses to sadistic bubble-gum cards, violent crime comic books, brutal movies and rough TV shows, crudely illustrated booklets like 'Sin and Pain' sold under the counter to teenagers, gorily presented murder news, etc. The audience so conditioned from childhood on finds the Vietnam fighting pictures really tame stuff and easily manipulated with regard to violence by the huge public relations establishment that has been constructed at the top of the military set-up, and the well-accomplished task of these public relations experts is to teach us not revulsion against war and violence, but receptivity to it. Practically every TV news cast now has some war pictures. In effect, these really are war commercials."*

People may have differing opinions about plum pudding, or the Scotch whisky Three Feathers or even about the way the film star, Elizabeth Taylor, dresses. But there are some things that go beyond the sphere of personal taste. And the existence of conflicting views on the question in hand can only be seen as the indication of a twisted mind. I should point out in parenthesis that the man whose views Fredric Wertham was so bitterly attacking, was James Hagerty, former Press Secretary to Eisenhower and now one of the heads of the television corporation American Broadcasting Company (ABC). And as for the average American viewer sitting in front of the

* *New York Times*, December 4, 1966.

telly with his can of beer and TV dinner, he is like the man who dozed off in the *Qui dort, meurt* chair. Victor Hugo writes about this chair in his novel *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*. It is a rock standing in the sea not far from the shore, which has been beaten by the waves into the shape of a chair. Anyone who sat in it and was lulled to sleep by the murmur of the waves, was caught by the tide and perished. The local fishermen called the rock the *Qui dort, meurt* chair, which is French for: "he who sleeps will die". . . .

It is a rare thing these days to find anyone who believes that man's material and spiritual life exist irrespective of each other, and the "material nature" of art is gaining more and more recognition. Although spiritual life is secondary and reflects reality, all forms of consciousness are at the same time the highest product of matter. This dialectic view of art as one of the forms of "spiritual and practical cognition of the world" (K. Marx) not only serves to reveal the interdependence of the basis and the superstructure, but also defines art as an independent variety of social reality and a specific form of human activity. It is precisely this small "but" which expresses the divergence between that which is apparent on the surface and that which is the true essence of the term "mass culture" as understood in the West. It appears to be something progressive, belonging to the "left" and rooted in the technological and scientific revolution of the 20th century, whereas in essence it is something conservative and reactionary, rooted in the spiritual counter-revolution of our time.

It has for a long time been a tradition among bourgeois historians to link the history of civilisation with that of religion. Religion was seen, as it were, as one of the garments in which man's

thoughts, hopes and aspirations manifested themselves. The nature of the religion and the choice of raiment varied according to national character and taste. The Ancient Greeks worshipped the naked Apollo, the Egyptians—Osiris, and the Christians—Christ in his white robes.

The mainstays of religion were fear and love. But it was fear that predominated. Christianity even took the crucifixion to banish eternal fear: do your worst with me, so that I may not have anything more terrible to fear.

The 20th century is one of unprecedented changes, unique in their significance and influence upon the destiny of mankind. The map of the world has changed beyond recognition. But now, in addition to a geographical and political map of the world, there is also a spiritual one. And, naturally enough, their frontiers do not coincide. Not everyone in the West believes that the individual is doomed to perish under the milestones of "mass culture" or that conformism will inevitably become universal. The main conflict of the modern age is that between optimism and pessimism. And this knows no visual boundaries. "We are proceeding on the conviction," says the Address of the recently held 4th Congress of Writers of the U.S.S.R. to writers of the world, "that the dividing line in literature and the arts which exists in our day does not lie between representatives of this or that artistic style, but between artists who, in their work and public life are inspired by high ideals, and those who reject this great mission of the writer and contribute consciously or unconsciously to the enslavement of man."^{*}

History has shown that civilisations rise and

^{*} *Literaturnaya gazeta*, May 31, 1967.

fall, that human society prospers or decays in accordance with that which it believes in, whether or not it has a belief at all, and what it is prepared to fight for. Albert Einstein was right when he said that the future of modern man depends in the last resort not so much on scientific and technological progress, as on moral foundations. The same idea is to be found in these lines by the poet Vasily Fyodorov:

*I stand for left-wing art,
But no further left than the heart.*

It is in this sense only that we should allow ourselves to be governed by the direction "Keep left!" Art, literature and the whole of culture should be humanitarian first and foremost. They can have no aim more noble than that of helping man to build himself a better life.

THE AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES OF THE AVANT-GARDE

The social role of the avant-garde can most conveniently be examined in relation to literature, since it is in this context that it can be seen most clearly. Here also the basic tenet of the movement—experimentation, was first applied on a large scale.

What experimentation in literature actually means is not as clear as it appears at first glance. It is generally used in the scientific sense of experiment necessary for the advance of knowledge, the testing of theory in practice.

But art is not constructed on theories. Nor is it constructed at all. It grows and develops in its own individual way through images, and any attempt to construct it ends in an assortment of clichés, artificiality and formalist gimmickry. All this has been borne out time and time again.

What is more, no scientist would ever offer you some half-baked recipe in place of the finished product. So how does experimental literature come to be published and to whom is it addressed, whom does it hope to interest, whom indeed? Other writers, is the frequent answer to this question. If this is so, the reader is likely to be most impressed when he finds himself confronted by the teachers of his teachers, real maitres, and all he can do is keep quiet cursing his ignorance if he has not understood it.

But one more question. Do writers actually need this sort of literature? Is it not for the most part exploited by literary hacks who are only too ready to sing the praises of this or that writer's

hidden talent, provided that the latter also recognises their outstanding gifts. And so, relying on each other for support, the two construct an impregnable bastion, inaccessible to the reader.

Finally, is it not suspicious that earlier writers, also 19th century, did not have recourse to any form of experimental literature or offer it to the reader, but at the same time made such a unique contribution to literature. If by experiment one means the inevitable risk that accompanies anything new, this has always existed, the difference being that when the experiment failed no one sought to justify it or count it as literature. It hadn't worked and that was the last of it.

All these questions indubitably give rise to friction between the experimenters and the public. However, they are real problems which cannot be dismissed with a mere "do better next time". At the same time there are the experimenters as well, who insist on their right to create new forms, opening up new paths and trends for the artist. Whichever view you take a lot remains dubious.

There was certainly a period in European and American literature of the 20th century when this idea seemed to be a really novel one and even brought to the fore corresponding writers. This was the time of the avant-garde movements of the twenties and beginning of the thirties.

In spite of the constant warnings and reservations of the critics, we still tend to confuse under the single term of "modernism" the two sharply divergent movements of the first "modernists" at the turn of the last century, who gave themselves the most unfortunate name of decadents (first the French, and then the English, Russians and Germans) and the avant-garde writers of the twenties. The latter were, of course, also "modernists" in a sense, i.e., they produced things which were new

and contemporary, but with this commonplace generalisation the resemblance ends. If we were to try and assess their respective literary merit according to the value of the works which they have left behind them, it is, perhaps, early modernism that would tip the scales. But on the basis of the forms which they produced and passed on to future generations, the avant-garde writers must take pride of place without a shade of doubt.

This is the fundamental distinction, the gulf, which separates for example Wilde from Joyce, Mallarmé from Breton and Sologub from Khlebnikov.

For the avant-garde school form was the most important aspect of art and the bearer of the artistic idea. But by means of this form they attempted to give expression not to themselves or any integral artistic image demanding the more complex, polished treatment of an individual organism. No, instead they strove to convey through it and it alone the spirit of their age.

Their attitudes towards realism were also widely divergent.

It must be borne in mind that for many young writers in the twenties realism simply no longer existed. For them it had been defeated and relegated to the past by the senseless war, as the embodiment of tranquillity, conviction and understanding of the world, all of which now seemed simply ridiculous, and the realistic tradition was totally concealed (on the surface at least) by the noisy proclamations of the various avant-garde schools.

T. S. Eliot, the great master of the avant-garde, welcomed the appearance of Joyce's *Ulysses* in 1922 and explained the significance of this book to the disenchanted generation of young writers as follows:

"Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. . . . I am not begging the question in calling *Ulysses* a 'novel'; and if you call it an epic it will not matter. If it is not a novel, that is simply because the novel is a form which will no longer serve." Joyce, he asserted, had invented a new form, brilliantly suited to our time. "It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. . . . Instead of the narrative method, we may now use the mythical method."

Eliot was clear and, seemingly, convincing. There was only one point in his programme that had to be taken on trust—the black chaos of life—and after the war which had been plotted by a number of coquettish "old boys" there were few young writers who doubted this. The rest followed naturally with a logic which soon brought together groups of like-minded people.

Their reasoning was roughly as follows.

Life is meaningless or, at least, not to be trusted. The realist who attempts to give it form is, at best, naive. But the truly contemporary artist will not cast aside his brush or pen. He will answer chaos with his own iron organisation. He will impose this meaning on the world, giving shape to everything, and this constitutes his victory. Joyce had already gained such a victory by subduing this hostile element with the help of a myth, that is, by "imposing" on the chaos of contemporary life in Dublin a world of mythical Homeric relations (the legend of the *Odyssey*) and creating an allegory or "parable". The *hoi polloi* and the short-sighted critics saw *Ulysses* as an indiscriminate outpouring of all the human rubbish that one may come upon. But Eliot point-

ed out—he actually did do this—that *Ulysses* is a meticulously planned and highly controlled work. Even in such a wretched character as Bloom, Joyce had detected a meaning, be it ironical, by clothing all his squalid “excursions” in the mythical wanderings of the *Odyssey*—all this outlined with the greatest clarity. It was now up to other true artists to follow his example. Obviously the mythical structure did not have to be the *Odyssey*. That was irrelevant. The choice is extremely wide, including Freudian myths, etc. The important thing was to understand the boundless possibilities opened up by this new technique.

Thus the avant-garde preached its message as a new aesthetic order, ready to hoist “banners” of all kinds on condition that its members shared the general enthusiasm and conviction, namely, that art can be made, manufactured out of the forms which the most daring and talented innovators were to fashion. Large detachments of enthusiasts and artists lacking in talent, but flushed and reassured began the search for these forms in the United States and Europe.

The idea of manufacturing appealed to the imagination. It was this that set the avant-garde apart from other artistic movements of the time (for example, symbolism or impressionism). The latter wanted to understand and give expression to something hitherto unknown by means of inspiration, whereas the avant-garde proposed the construction of artistic works from carefully selected models, the mastering of the modern technique and its subjection to the required aim. The latter’s dispute with realism was about who could convey the meaning of life best, most subtly, whereas the avant-garde decided to introduce this meaning into life itself, and to give life fresh contours by its new form. To quote an

example from Russian literature, Blok and Gumilyov give an idea of this turning-point. K. I. Chukovsky recalls their meeting:

"Gumilyov would always start to attack Blok with his customary intrepidity.

"You symbolists are nothing but rogues. You take a weight and write 'one ton' on it. Then you hollow out the centre and perform various tricks with it, when all the time it's just empty.

"Blok would then reply in a flat voice.

"'This is true of all imitators in all movements. It has nothing to do with symbolism. And what you are saying does not sound Russian to me. It would go very well in French. You are too much of a literary man, and a French one at that.'"

The words "too much of a literary man" are a precise definition of the threat which the avant-garde presented to literature. Blok was soon to criticise it openly in his article about the "Poets' Workshop"—"Without Divinity, Without Inspiration". This threat disturbed and alarmed the great writers of many countries; for example, H. G. Wells discussed it in his famous letter to Joyce about *Ulysses*.

However, this correct diagnosis of the danger did not yet mean that it could be stopped. The idea of a synthetic literature was too tempting. The artificial paints which the avant-garde began to manufacture for writers had considerable commercial advantages: they were bright ones which could command attention forcefully like advertisements and be mixed rapidly into any colour blend. But the most important advantage was that their combination helped the writer to adhere to a direct idea of his own ordering in an interesting and even somewhat enigmatic way.

Moreover they were capable of being used by anyone. Whereas it used to be considered unar-

tistic and in bad taste to repeat forms already used by another artist, the avant-garde announced precisely the opposite: after such and such an innovator it was both wrong and shameful to "write as before" ("Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him"); you have no hope of being up-to-date if you have not mastered this technique. Formerly they were taught to read and understand literature; now they began to be taught how to write and distribute it. Special schools were opened and learned teachers began to appear. The young American writers were led by Gertrude Stein, the English and the international avant-garde in general by T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, and the French by André Gide. In Russian literature it was LEF with its first command: "each little flea of rhyme must be taken into account", etc. The impression grew that a new era was actually at hand, when primitive talent would be compelled first to retreat, like the Red Indian, and then gradually become extinct within the confines of a reservation while qualified professors tried to find out from him the last "artistic secret".

In Russia these forms appeared, for example, in the person of Boris Pilnyak, a typical writer of the avant-garde, and one of the earliest, practically the first pioneer of avant-garde prose. His novel *The Naked Year*, a classical work of its kind, mature and consistent according to the laws of the new technique, took its place alongside Joyce's *Ulysses* and the most extravagant experiments of Gertrude Stein.

The novel was completely dominated by the sensation of a whirlwind, an "iron snow-storm". But it must be emphasised straightaway that it by no means stood for chaos put on to paper just as it is. It was an attempt to convey through

heightened style the rhythm of modern life requiring new efforts and new unexpected decisions. Pilnyak's style itself was remarkable—impetuous, telegraphic, with large gaps leaving only stressed words, a style which suddenly became heavy, thick, almost oily in order to sketch briefly, to "fix" some scene of everyday life: "train number fifty seven is crawling along the steppe. . . ." Here he stops, as it were, and piles on definitions and objects one after another; in the train, for example, these were mess-tins, soldiers' boots, lice, hungry, blue, yellow exhausted faces, dirt. The author lingers for a peep into a passing village; people are bartering clothes for flour, also a brief sketch: the owner is wondering gloomily if he has given over-weight, "the peasant women were standing by the doorway in meek silence. An old woman called out ten times from the stove: who's arrived, then?"

And then suddenly the style leaps up from the point where it has barely settled down and rushes off full steam ahead. At this point it is pierced by strange leit-motifs, like flashes of lightning, recurring refrains, which seem to be trying to light up all the disarray and wildness of certain forced combinations, which are, nevertheless, essential for this stormy time: "gvee-ooo! glav-boom!" . . . Or: "Come you tators, come you lators"—this last phrase was clearly intended to embody in its gay, Russian folk song rhythm the idea of "the technological re-grinding" which stagnant, bourgeois life was to undergo. This life was also given its own refrains which suddenly surfaced among descriptions or at the end of a chapter: "Who goes there? A philistine." Or "Tomatoes on sale here."

The style, however, is still only the language, semi-linguistic side of form, which cannot, of

course, embrace everything. There is yet another, second side which transcends the boundaries of grammar and syntax, binding together and arranging the material of the work in its own way. From this point of view the novel *The Naked Year* was also extremely revealing.

In the first place, Pilnyak broke up the narrative into several parts each of which had its own central character, although there was a single story-line in the novel as a whole. But he went even further than this. He decided to write some of these parts from the point of view of the central figure, thereby anticipating Joyce. There were special headings: "Seen Through Natalya's Eyes" or "Seen Through Andrei's Eyes". As a result of this device the narrative was constantly being presented in a new light through the changes in style which this method permitted.

The novel contains yet another innovation worthy of mention. This is the appearance of the author himself as one of the characters, the open, unmasked "I", who takes part in the action, with less justification than the other figures, let it be added. The fact that he is set apart from the action and style of the novel was probably intended to heighten its authenticity: here are the facts, and here is my opinion about them. The whirlwind, the "telegraphic" transitions and the fleeting refrains, etc., are intended to form a kind of objective element in which reader and writer alike found themselves together with characters and live people.

For example, at one point there is an emotional account in elevated language about factories being rebuilt and brigades of revolutionary workers constructing the new "industry" in remote, neglected areas. The mood of the passage is suddenly shattered by the statement: "I, the author,

took part in this expedition." This instantly produced, as it were, two levels—i.e., all this elevated, tough activity is not my creation, although it is I who am describing it, but part and parcel of the expedition; but I also took part in it, and so it is mine as well.

The isolation of the author and the introduction of the first person as a real, active character and not a conventional one served yet another purpose: activity. At that time artists were most acutely aware of the irremediable impotence of art and the breach that existed between men of phantasy and men of action. The role of the author, it was held, was to bring them together. Pilnyak was also one of the writers to suggest how this might be done in prose. As a true avant-garde writer his understanding of this was extremely vague and the actual discovery of this device was an end in itself. As has already been mentioned he saw the creation of modern forms as his task, and the introduction of the author into the texture of the novel itself helped him to work out the actual structure of the novel's theme and extract it as such in pure form. The last section of his book was subheaded "Essentially Raw Material" throwing open the doors of his "creative workshop" and inviting the reader in.

Here again he also anticipated the searchings of the avant-garde in the West, which would still have taken place even if Pilnyak had not been read there, for the idea was too novel and alluring, and only became clear when it was examined independently.

André Gide's novel *Les faux monnayeurs* appeared in France in 1926 and caused a sensation. Gide introduced the writer Eduard into his story, clearly his double, who in his discussion of art advocated "sweeping out the past" and, in partic-

ular, "purging the novel of all elements which, by their nature, do not belong to it". In accordance with this manifesto, the structure of *Les faux monnayeurs* itself was exposed and freed from superfluous detail, and the author himself in the person of Eduard explained and assessed it before the eyes of his readers.

Two years later this experiment was repeated in England by Aldous Huxley (in his novel *Point Counter Point*, 1928): "Put a novelist into the novel . . . specimens of his work may illustrate other possible or impossible ways of telling a story." And this is precisely what he did. The novelist—the author, "I", Huxley—keeps a diary in the book, in which he expresses, as it were *en passant*, daring, paradoxical, incomplete ideas like arrows pointing the way.

Eventually it became clear that the experiment had failed. Both novels were popular, but when the bare subject matter became dated, very little artistic merit remained and what did remain was precisely that which did not coincide with the disjointed structure. In the meantime, the abstract theme, which did not find concrete expression in the characters and plot, etc., began to spin round in ever-decreasing spirals closer and closer to the lonely "I". Towards the end of *Les faux monnayeurs* Eduard has reached the following view: "It is even doubtful that one cannot take doubt itself as one's base . . . I can doubt the reality of my own doubt."

All this experimentation undoubtedly influenced literature and its traces may be noticed up to the present day. But the principle of "ready forms" relegated art to the role of an assembly workshop, so to speak. And the literature trying to conform to it, for all its initial originality, began

to exude more and more stylistic clichés and conventionality.

We have examined the prose of Boris Pilnyak as an example of the sources of the avant-garde, but if we were to draw a mental axis from his style through the centre of the earth we should be amazed to find in the other hemisphere his exact copy in English, namely, the American writer, John Dos Passos.

Let us consider his *42nd Parallel*. His spontaneous, telegraphic style, the same sudden switches of subject, the same leit-motifs, taken straight from the columns of a newspaper. In between them, washed by the stream of "modern life" are a few biographies. They are also distributed in fragments and assembled, as it were, one upon the other—the world from several points of view. The worker Mac, the careerist John Moorehouse, Eleanora Stoddard, the cold, calculating spinster and owner of a fashionable decorating business, little Emiscah who reminds one of Pilnyak's "Soviet lady" Olyenka Kunts, and Keith, the pioneer fruit seller. All these and others flash past in brief sketches in the same garish style. "Grassi read the papers every day and was very much afraid the U.S. would go into the war. Then he said he'd have to hop across the border to Mexico. He was an anarchist and a quiet sort of guy who spent the evenings singing low to himself and playing the accordion on the lodging-house steps." He is even similar in character to Comrade Yuzik, the member of the "anarchists' commune" in Pilnyak's *The Naked Year*, who was fond of repeating dreamily: "The world is a prison."

The English critic, Wyndham Lewis, noted that even the very pioneers of the "avant-garde", strictly speaking, lacked originality, having

borrowed their style from Alfred Jingle, the famous scoundrel from the *Pickwick Papers*: "Terrible place—dangerous work—other day—five children—mother—tall lady, eating sandwiches," and so on. One could quote even more relevant examples of this such as Doktor Eckstein from Hoffman's *Der Goldene Topf*: "Just nerves—it'll pass, in the fresh air—have a walk—enjoy myself—the theatre—*Sunday's Child*—*Sisters from Prague*."

Time has shown that true literature is not created by forms "discovered in advance" with which the "avant-garde" representatives wanted to make a name for themselves. It may be asserted that the structure of the famous Hemingway phrase was first discovered by Gertrude Stein as an objective element, "the spirit of the times". And when he rapidly gained world fame Stein even tried making the "novice" acknowledge his debt to her. But Hemingway had no need to justify himself. Forms belong to their age, i.e., to everyone. The real problem was to master and transfix them in imagery, and this required creative strength. What was necessary was knowledge, talent, imagination and a full understanding of how and why the soul speaks in these "signs". The avant-garde writer, like Napoleon's soldier, merely finds the stone with the enigmatic inscription. The artist reads it.

It gradually became increasingly evident that the influence of the avant-garde was temporary and truly, though necessarily, experimental. Literature lost more than it gained through this, because of the imperceptible drift towards clichés and ready-made forms. The more "brilliant forms" were accumulated and the more the ability of finding a new technique was exulted, the more obvious it became that this ability served to

destroy talent rather than liberate it. In other words, the artistic image could not be constructed and exist on this foundation. It was proved once again that books which appeal to everyone—from the intellectuals to those who just like “something to read”—(such as *The Good Soldier Schweik* and *And Quiet Flows the Don*) and have kept their popularity, found their own form for themselves. Whereas those which were shaped according to this or that formal principle have gradually been pushed aside, or, if their writers were really gifted, have had to struggle hard to assert their merit. We feel this clearly when reading the novels of such celebrated writers as Thomas Mann or Hemingway.

Moreover, it has also become evident that experimental literature with its passion for racing ahead whatever the cost distracted our attention from that which was really important in the twenties. Its noisy lavishing of praise on technical innovation was like a publicity baton constantly on view, passing on the magic word of innovation from one master to the next, and riveting the attention. Public disputes, renunciations, sudden doubts and decisions “to become mature”, seemingly confidential appeals to the reader to share in the writer’s reflections on his spiritual crisis or literary talent, all this carried on with the support of the press hungry for the latest sensations, combined to form an unbroken chain of events which could be followed almost without noticing the real writers.

The technical similarity of each of its links meant that the chain could easily transcend national frontiers, and it became increasingly common for a writer in one country to get famous in another not because of his intrinsic worth or importance, but because of his reputation as an

"inventor of new means of vision" or fighter "against the philistine quagmire". The latter by acclaiming each other were able to refer to the "international recognition" of their services and hand on the baton further and further afield. Only today, looking back over the expanses where their torches used to burn, we find with surprise a different kind of literature which is truly breaking new ground tapping truth where it springs in its entirety and left behind by those who rushed ahead in search of experiment. The reading public was suddenly faced with a whole string of writers whose importance had hitherto been neglected. In America it was writers such as Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Scott Fitzgerald and Margaret Mitchell; in Russia Prishvin, Neverov, Bulgakov and I. Katayev; in England the poetry of Thomas Hardy, the provincial who had scarce received a mention during the period of the "tragic search" of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, etc., the novels of John Cowper Powys, also overshadowed by the avant-garde, and so on and so forth. In spite of the fact that it was delayed, not without detriment, talent began to win back its rights from literary synthetics.

It would seem that enough is now known of the advantages and pitfalls of the experimental method. Literature now adopts a more cautious attitude towards it, especially since technology has produced unlimited possibilities for the duplication of ready-made forms. From this it would appear unlikely that the modern-day Gertrude Stein, Natalie Sarraute, who is just as *recherché* and uncompromising in her search for new, and only new techniques of writing, will manage to find her Hemingway.

PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARTS*

Does Progress Exist in the Arts?

The age in which we live is characterised above all by the powerful drive to forge ahead, profound social change and revolutionary advances in science and technology. It is impossible to deny the progressive course of history in these days of transition from capitalism to socialism, and man's conquest of outer space.

There is, however, one field of human activity—the arts—in relation to which even the most experienced and erudite people throw up their hands in horror, when the conversation turns to progressive development. Art and progress are incompatible, they maintain. They admit, of course, that the arts never stand still, but hold that it is impossible to speak of progress when we can still enjoy Aeschylus and Euripides, Dante and Shakespeare, Pushkin and Lev Tolstoi, Diderot and Balzac, in spite of the fact that they all wrote a long time ago. In their view there are no objective criteria for speaking of the progressive development of the arts.

It would, of course, be naive to assume that each new book should be better than the one before. Every age produces its share of literature, good, bad and indifferent. It is also often the case that works which are extremely popular when they first appear do not stand the test of time;

* Extract from the introduction to *Communism and the Arts*.

they are ignored by subsequent generations and remain of interest only to the historian. Moreover, by no means all the changes which take place in the arts are for the better, representing an advance on what has gone before.

Must we conclude from all this that there is no progressive development in the arts?

It is clear even from a brief examination of the history of art that each of its stages is marked by certain distinctive changes of varying profundity, length and significance. But history is not simply a conglomeration of random events. Throughout all these different changes one can clearly trace the interconnection of aesthetic phenomena with each other and with social phenomena, above all the material conditions of a given society. And although changes do not take place simultaneously in all spheres of society, it is quite possible to see them as a whole linked with the general course of history.

The interconnection between social and artistic development is seen most clearly in man's spiritual development the essence of which, to quote Marx, is not an abstraction inherent in each individual, but the ensemble of all social relations.* It is man's spiritual resources and his creative talent and potential *taken as a whole in all spheres of life* that are the best indication of the level of a society's social and aesthetic development, which is determined in the last analysis by its *mode of production*.** It is art which is best able

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1964, p. 652.

** Marx's words have an important bearing on the understanding of social progress as well. We judge it not by the effect which this or that change in society has on isolated individuals, but by their effect on the people as a whole and the extent to which they meet the require-

to portray the integrated person in all his relations to reality. Because of this, art is able to give a full reflection of society and all its basic relations. It is, however, essential to be able to distinguish clearly how and where progress manifests itself in art, and how social progress is reflected in the progress of art.

Failure to understand the dialectic interrelation of these two aspects results frequently in an incorrect interpretation of the progress in art or a flat rejection of it.

It will be recollected that Oswald Spengler reduced the history of society to the history of its art, relying on the method of "empathy" and rejecting all objective laws and causality. Views of this kind still find support today. At the same time another phenomenon is becoming more and more evident: the desire to reduce art to life and identify them as one and the same thing. At first glance this appears to be the opposite of Spengler's view, but in fact the two extremes are very similar. In both cases social being and social consciousness, or the object and its reflection in art, are identified with each other. This gives grounds for all sorts of subjectivist theories, according to which there is no social progress whatsoever, just as if history were simply marking time and juggling with the same phenomena.

In fact we judge progress in relation to social conditions, by ascertaining the actual changes which have taken place and the nature of these changes. Moreover, the *decisive factor* in the

ments of the people in a given society at a given epoch. It is the struggle of the masses which paves the way for progress and transforms the "ideal" into reality. Thus the term "man" is used in this context as a generic concept denoting not the individual, but the people who are the driving force behind the social and cultural process.

development of the arts, artistic cognition, is also to be found not in people's minds, but in the material conditions of their lives.

History shows that the evaluation of the arts in terms of "progress" and "regression" acquires special significance in the transitional periods which mark the change from one social system to another. This is not surprising, because these periods are characterised by an open conflict between new productive forces and old production relations which intensify all social contradictions. The people begin to play a more active role, society takes on new forms, the basis of a new superstructure is laid and the whole process of social development is accelerated.

It was Marx who emphasised that with the change of the economic foundation, the whole immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.* This revolution also affects social consciousness, culture and the arts. A new world outlook emerges and the class-consciousness of the various social groups increases. *A new type of culture*, including the arts, is formed. A new aesthetic system replaces the old one, and there is a greater and ever more profound reappraisal of values. New traditions arise which link the period in question with preceding and subsequent artistic development, and new moral and aesthetic ideas emerge. It must be understood, however, that although the human consciousness always reflects the changes taking place at the base, *it does not always give a true picture of them*. This explains why a revolution in the economy may be given distorted expression in aesthetics and the arts.

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 363.

Likewise it would be wrong to accept unreservedly all judgements about earlier historical periods and the art of the past. Plekhanov was right when he said that the Enlighteners approved only those aesthetic phenomena which corresponded to their concepts, and this is not an isolated case. One frequently finds a disparity of views in the aesthetic evaluation of this or that period, particularly in relation to works of art.

One must always bear in mind that people "see themselves in their forefathers and descendants" as Pierre Simon Balanche put it. They judge the past and future by their own age and its requirements, in accordance with currently accepted ideas, and very often in a limited way, drawing a direct analogy with the past and elevating their own aesthetic views into absolute principles.

Marxism, which revealed the unity of the general and historical elements in society and culture, does not reject the application of standards to art. It refuses to acknowledge only the *metaphysical* standards of "absolute beauty" which disregard the integrity of the historical process and the incessant variety of forms in which general laws reveal themselves in life, culture and the arts.

In writing about the fact that to a certain extent Greek art and epic poetry still retain the authority of a standard and an unattainable ideal, Marx linked this with certain forms of social development without which Greek art would not have existed. "The attraction which their art has for us does not arise from a contradiction with the primitive social conditions in which this art developed. It is a direct result of these conditions and is unextricably bound up with the fact

that the immature social conditions in which it emerged, and without which it could not have emerged, can never return again."^{*}

These words are sometimes interpreted in such a way as to suggest that Marx, the leader of the proletariat, is expressing nostalgia for the patriarchal past and extolling the virtues of a backward society. This is nonsense, of course. If Greek art still preserves its significance as a standard and an unattainable ideal, it is because it was here that "the childhood of the human race" took on its most beautiful form, that it was in Ancient Greece that the fullest and most dynamic development of all social forms took place. The point is not that it was a backward society, but that the class antagonisms were still immature. They became acute under feudalism, and particularly in bourgeois society, where they affected all spheres from the base to the most remote form of social consciousness—the arts.^{**}

The hostile attitude of bourgeois society to the arts was noted already by Hegel, but it was Marx who proved scientifically that capitalist production is "hostile to certain fields of spiritual activity, such as poetry and the arts".^{***} Capitalist production inhibits the spiritual development of the worker by turning him into the appendage of the machine; it also condemns the bourgeois himself to spiritual poverty to the extent that his desire for wealth and pursuit of profit over-

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 12, pp. 737-38. ("Introduction. Selections from *Economic Manuscripts, 1857-58*".)

** M. Livshits, Introduction to the Collection *K. Marx and F. Engels on Art*, Iskusstvo Publishing House, Moscow, 1957, Russ. ed., pp. XX-XXVII.

*** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, Part 1, Russ. ed., p. 280 ("Theory of Surplus Value", volume four of *Capital*).

come all other feelings. Capitalism turns everything, art included, into a commodity. All artistic achievements—in prose, the novel in particular, painting, music, etc.—are the product of a battle against the anti-aesthetic nature of bourgeois relations and the power of money. This is why the Ancient World, where man was the aim of production, seems so much nobler than the bourgeois one in which production is the aim of man, and riches the aim of production.

The comparative importance of different historical periods and in a certain sense of whole formations, in man's artistic development, depends on *the extent to which the social relations of these formations and periods bring out man's humanity, whether and to what extent they encourage art to be humane, what part is played by the people in the arts and to what degree artistic treasures belong to the people*. These factors are bound to affect the comparative value of the artistic output of different historical periods, and also make themselves felt on the various artistic trends and schools and the work of individual artists within given periods, influencing the nature of the arts, their ideological and aesthetic content, the extent to which they show life as it is and the basic requirements of social progress.

The relation between world progress and the progress of individual societies generally, and in the field of the arts in particular, is becoming an extremely important question in sociology and aesthetic theory.

The history of art is a process by which mankind is constantly enriched by new works of artistic value, which if they reflect their age faithfully never fade or lose their importance. The truly great works of earlier periods continue to

appeal to the minds and emotions of new generations. Even if they are now to be found in museums, there is nothing "old-fashioned" about them. People visit art galleries not only because of their historical interest in the great painters of the past, but because the works themselves are interesting and moving.

New works of art do not invalidate or supersede earlier ones. "A grown man cannot go back to being a child—he simply becomes childish. But this does not mean that he cannot appreciate the naiveté of a child and should not strive to express his own mature self on a higher level. Is it not a fact that in each age the unique features of the child come to life again in their simple truth?"* This analogy goes right to the heart of the matter: true works of art survive for ever as products of the human genius.

The position is quite different in science, where earlier discoveries are "boggled up" by subsequent ones and simply go to form part of the sum total of knowledge at any given period. Scientists do not need to keep turning back to earlier achievements. What is more, in studying similar phenomena they may happen to reach the same conclusions independently of each other, whereas true artists can never produce the same work.

At the same time it is impossible for artists to ignore the heritage of the past. Gorky was quite right when he wrote: "...Almost every book by a new writer has an organic link with the works which have preceded it, and each new book contains an element of the past. This is

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 12, p. 737 ("Introduction. Selections from *Economic Manuscripts, 1857-58*").

bound to be the case, *for spiritual development is a continuous process* (author's italics), and all writers are subject to the law of literary heredity. Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert and Maupassant could never have existed without each other. . . ."

This is, in fact, the case. Each new artist finds himself faced with a particular level of material and spiritual culture and a certain apparatus of ideas which he is bound to reckon with, such as notions about what is beautiful and what is ugly, and current taste in general. If the artist loses touch with his audience he is doomed not to be understood by them.

Condorcet even spoke of laws governing taste in the arts. His conception of these laws was incorrect. Nevertheless if one discounts the meta-physical limitations of his views, it is certainly true that artistic taste, man's ability to appreciate and respond to that which is beautiful in nature, society and works of art, is bound to influence the development of art as a whole. This is true both when the artist breaks the barrier of traditional artistic ideas and perception, and when he conforms to public taste whether consciously or unconsciously. Here it must be emphasised that the artist's audience and people's aesthetic response and artistic tastes are formed by life as a whole, by the whole complex of social conditions, and not only by art and artists. In other words, *artistic activity, that is the activity of the artist and the ideological and aesthetic level of the public*, although it has its own specific aims, character and forms, is indissolubly linked with all other forms of human activity and all aspects of society.

* A. M. Gorky, *On Art*, Collection of articles and extracts, Iskustvo Publishing House, Moscow-Leningrad, 1940, Russ. ed., pp. 150-51.

From this it follows that politics, philosophy and ethics are not outside the sphere of art, as is held by some theoreticians, whose aim is to isolate art from all progressive political, moral and philosophical ideas.

On the contrary, the treatment of such ideas by the arts gives them a specific aesthetic significance, for they become an integral part of a work of art after passing through the crucible of human consciousness and emotions. Thus art is linked with life and its social laws both directly and through other forms of social consciousness which, incidentally, invariably leave their mark on all works of aesthetic value created by talented artists. The arts are constantly becoming more closely integrated with science, ethics and philosophy, thereby enriching all spheres of human life.

There are, of course, certain forms of social consciousness which impede artistic development. Religion is one of them. It attempts to remove the arts to "transcendental heights" and deprive them of their "earthly" content. Rublyov's *Old Testament Trinity* and Alexander Ivanov's *Christ's First Appearance to the People* are still capable of having a strong emotional effect on us today, not because of their religious subjects, but because these great artists succeeded in portraying real life and the greatness of the human soul, even though this is in religious clothing.

The connection that existed in the early stages of human society between religion and the arts is, of course, indisputable. At that time the development of productive forces was such that people could not envisage the world rationally without "higher deities". But it would be wrong to identify religious and artistic assimilation of reality as being one and the same. Religion always springs from *ignorance*, whereas the arts develop

from *knowledge*, man's growing understanding of the objective world. Looking back over the history of art it is easy to find striking examples of the sharp contrast between religious myths and, say, fairy stories, or the folk tales during the period of tribal disintegration. It is more difficult to distinguish between legend and myth at earlier stages, because generalisation of all kinds took the form of myths. This fact, however, does not support the view that the religious and artistic assimilation of reality are one and the same, because the mythology of that period was primitive and syncretic, i.e., pre-religion.

It is indisputable that medieval European culture developed under the influence of Christianity, and that the acceptance of the Christian faith in old Russia was a progressive factor. At the same time it is equally obvious that the development of the arts during this period was not due to religion as such, but to the cultural influences which accompanied it. Religious dogma and asceticism actively impeded the flowering of the arts. In the ancient world mythology stimulated the development of the arts only to the extent that legends and myths were artistic generalisations free from all religious dogma.

The arts have never succumbed to mysticism, even in the Middle Ages when religion tried so hard to make them serve its own ends. Although medieval hymns, religious poetry and other genres originated partly through religion, they also drew widely on folklore in which the pre-Christian elements were very strong. There also existed a great deal of epic poetry, courtly lyrics, novels, architecture and many other forms of applied art in the Middle Ages which was untouched by religion.

Truly great art does not reject the realm of the

fantastic, of course. The arts are not concerned with a mechanical reproduction of isolated facts. They always seek to give a generalised picture of life and may, therefore, have recourse to exaggerated imagery, symbols and the grotesque if these devices help to produce a true picture of reality. The artistic image may be a conventional or grotesque one, but the essence of art always remains the true portrayal of life and a correct understanding of its essential relations and connections. This is easily detectable if one approaches the history of art without prejudice.

In their progressive development *the arts are gradually discarding all those elements which give a distorted picture of the objective world*, making it possible for them to show man and his spiritual life with increasing profundity, thereby inspiring people with confidence in their own creative powers.* Like all irrational artistic ten-

* The advocates of "a broader interpretation of realism" or "abstract realism" which is the same thing, seek to compress the whole of art right up to the 20th century under the narrow heading of naturalism ("illusionism"). They assign the leading role in the development of "illusionism" to Balzac, and regard as the great minds of the 20th century those artists who rely exclusively on wild bursts of imagination and intuition, producing a distorted, arbitrary vision of life and striving to divorce the arts from every appearance of reality. This is called "reaching the heights of realism": whereas in the past artists aimed at reproducing life, now, it is held, the arts must create their own special reality in accordance with the artist's whim.

Such theoreticians hold that the artist understands and portrays the world not as a reflection of reality but through the mirror of his imagination which is divorced from reality. They make no distinction between realist convention and the type of convention that removes the artist from reality transforming it into a whimsical, mental exercises. Naturally, such an interpretation distorts the history of the arts, and the artistic image is replaced by myth and convention.

dencies, religion impedes the artistic comprehension of reality and prevents the artist from showing the progress of the masses towards freedom in all its beauty and fullness. It prevents him from understanding and explaining life and the new phenomena which are constantly emerging and gaining strength. These irrational forces are like dead branches on the living tree of artistic knowledge, but they also have their roots. Once they have made an appearance a whole tradition springs up. As it develops art breaks with traditions such as these which represent obstacles to the artistic comprehension of the objective world. But it does not reject all traditions out of hand by any means. It absorbs all those features of its artistic heritage which help it to make new discoveries, and goes on to enrich classical traditions and create new artistic forms.

New social phenomena and themes present the artist with new problems in the sphere of form as well. The predominant genre during the archaic period, the heroic epic, was later replaced by drama in the classical period of Ancient Greece. This marked the transition from collective art to literature and did away with the static, descriptive features of epic poetry, concentrating events around a central conflict which was finally resolved. This was a new form with its own specific stylistic and compositional features. We then see drama gradually freeing itself from ritual (Ancient Greece) and drawing on narrative prose, whilst still retaining the nature of a spectacle (Middle Ages), until it finally assumes a purely literary form. On the other hand, the nature of the dramatic conflict also changed gradually. In Ancient Greece the mainspring of the action was fate, in Renaissance drama historical events began to play an important part, the 17th century de-

voted increasing attention to the "human soul" and the theatre of the Enlightenment in the 18th century was given over entirely to the drama of common life depicting the "environment" and life of the third estate (one can only speak of drama in the modern sense of the word from the period of the Enlightenment when the strict dividing-line between tragedy and comedy disappeared).

The gradual perfecting of artistic comprehension of reality is one of the distinguishing features of progress in the arts. During this process artistic creation as a whole and the means and devices employed by the artist in his treatment of "material" become more refined and advanced. This makes it possible for the arts to give a more profound and comprehensive reflection of reality, provided one is talking about *the mainstream of artistic development*.

Finally, it is also impossible for the arts to stand still and mark time because the cultural development of society involves the development of aesthetic sense and popular taste. In other words the subject of the arts, *the people themselves develop aesthetically*, their spiritual world and consciousness growing richer. This is both the condition for and the result of progressive development in the arts.

In short, from one age to the next *possibilities for the artistic cognition of reality and for the people to take part in artistic development increase, and this is accompanied by a growth in the importance of the arts in the life of society*.

Different historical conditions have encouraged or impeded the development of the arts and the aesthetic education of the people in varying degrees. However, there has never been in the progressive movement a complete "break" in the arts. Artistic thought has never dried up. Even

in the Middle Ages, which were regarded by the Enlighteners of the 18th century as "primitive" and "dark", the arts continued to produce new discoveries and achievements.

It should suffice to mention the Gothic cathedrals of Rheims and Chartres, Amiens and Paris, Freiburg and Köln, the mosques of Cairo, Bukhara and Samarkand, the Moslem palaces in Spain, the Moscow Kremlin and the Echmiadzin Monastery, the *Chanson de Roland* and the poem *Tristan und Isolde*, church frescoes and sculpture, polyphonic music (*musica mensurata*) and other rudiments of new musical culture, as well as the burgher literature which became the leading force in Western European literature from the 13th century. Nor did the Middle Ages break with what had gone before, in particular the culture of the Ancients. "Saint" Augustine by no means rejected everything that he inherited from the Ancients and his successor, Alcuin, delighted in the works of Virgil, Ovid and Horace. In spite of the oppressive dictatorship of the church, the influence of ancient culture was felt on philosophy, literature and the arts generally. It was studied through the filter of medieval thought, and individual aspects of it were developed by the great artists of the Middle Ages who were clearing the way for the art of the Renaissance. Lenin rightly observed that: "Everything is vermittlet=mediated, bound into one, connected by transitions."^{*}

The existence of an objective historical link between the different stages in the development of the arts is indisputable.^{**} What is of interest is the nature of this link.

^{*} V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 103.

^{**} See A. V. Gulyga's article "Does Progress Exist in the Arts?" published in *Uoprossi Filosofii*, No. 6 (1964).

One frequently comes across two extreme and conflicting views on this subject in philosophical and historical writing: one attempts to deny the single line in artistic development, whereas the other seeks to present the history of the arts as a sort of smooth evolution of aesthetic phenomena taking place without the struggle between the various social and class tendencies in a class society and without any contradictions or sudden leaps. This reduces everything to the simple formula: of "gradual progression" or "leaps". If we were to translate these abstract ideas into historical terms, we would be obliged to accept the patently false view that Renaissance art differed very little from medieval art, or we would be bound, equally erroneously, to ignore the struggle between the conflicting forces of the old and which went on in both medieval and Renaissance art. The fact that aesthetic continuity and the interaction of tradition and innovation are of vital importance for the development of the arts does not mean that there are no leaps and contradictions, obstacles and difficulties, of isolated movements backwards and forwards.

Marxist dialectics, in strict conformity with the facts, recognises that a new quality can be formed not only through "explosions" but also as the result of the gradual "growth" of the new quality and the gradual withering-away of the old. By recognising the transition from quantitative to qualitative change by means of the gradual formation of the new quality, it emphasises the complex nature of this gradual process. One is obliged to distinguish between minor and major leaps, seeing the latter as the result of *historical development*, as a whole. This means that a leap which results from the gradual formation of a new quality must not be treated as a

mechanical manifestation of the new rooted in the old. In the said case one is dealing with a change in the structure, the emergence and confirmation of the new.

Human society experiences changes which correspond to the transition from one age to the next and also great historic change-overs (eras), such as the transition from primitive to class society and from class society to classless communist society. Corresponding change-overs also occur in the sphere of the arts and are radically different from the changes which take place within each individual age.

Thus European Renaissance art arose as a direct result of the preceding economic, political and cultural developments. Its origins are to be found in the Italian towns where craftsmanship and trade were flourishing and which, after driving out the aristocracy or at least taking the reins of government out of their hands, had become bastions of free thought and "heretical" teaching rejecting asceticism and dogmatism as early as the Middle Ages—towns where a great number of anti-clerical works appeared. But the transition to Renaissance culture was not simply an evolution of medieval culture. It was a real *revolution in spiritual culture* denoting a break with the Middle Ages and medieval thought. Renaissance culture opened up a whole new era: it contained the seeds of modern artistic development. By casting off the spiritual yoke of the church and feudalism it enabled the arts to depict the beauty of real life and the true nature of man. It renewed the *ideological foundations* of the arts, asserting freedom of thought and humanist principles. It did away with all the ideas and standards which had grown up over the long period of the Middle Ages under the influence of

the church. In banishing the phantoms of the Middle Ages, Renaissance art also overcame the stereotyped *forms* of medieval artistic consciousness and opened the door to realism as a conscious artistic *method* and the decisive trend in artistic development (in spite of all the complexity of the aesthetic phenomena and the different ideological and social forms of humanism).

The October Socialist Revolution wrought even more profound changes, the like of which did not and could not have happened at an earlier stage in history, affecting all spheres of social life including that of the arts. It marks the beginning of active artistic creation by the people, and of the division of labour being freed entirely from those social and class factors which inhibited the spiritual and aesthetic development of the individual. The new communist culture has its own method, its own aesthetic ideal; it did not grow up spontaneously like artistic culture in the past, but was created consciously and according to certain principles. The end of spontaneity in social history also marked the beginning of an age of true freedom for the arts, allowing them to develop and flourish. Communism presupposes not only a qualitatively new artistic culture, but a new type of social and artistic development free from antagonistic contradictions and discord.

Marxist-Leninist philosophy does not see the progressive development of society and knowledge simply in terms of the transition from quantitative to qualitative change. It is true that certain textbooks deal with the transition from quantitative to qualitative changes without reference to the law of the unity and conflict of opposites. This is an over-simplification, however. In fact Marxist philosophy sees progressive development and social progress from the point

of view of *all the laws* of dialectical materialism. It also takes into account the law of the negation of negation which was ignored for a long time by many Soviet philosophers. This law is now explained in all textbooks on philosophy, but unfortunately the explanations given are sometimes one-sided, ignoring such aspects as the repetition on higher levels of certain characteristics and features found in earlier stages. These aspects are extremely important, for the partial return to a former condition, on a higher level, is none other than a form of progressive development in general,* and of art in particular. If this were a complete repetition, nothing new would ever emerge in life or art.

We should not see the history of the arts, or indeed of anything at all, simply as a continuous quantitative growth of values, but as the specific, complex dialectical process of artistic development, as continuity and the enrichment and further development of traditions. This process presupposes the emergence and perfection of the new, progress in the form of a spiral and not a smooth, straight line upwards, without leaps and contradictions and conflicting forces and tendencies.

One might put it like this: progressive development is not possible without change, but not all changes mean social progress, since they can be regressive as well.** What then is meant by

* This, in our opinion, is the essence of the law of the negation of negation in dialectics, if we are not going to give it, and it alone, the absolute significance of the law of progressive development.

** See Y. P. Frantsev's article entitled "The Theory of Progress and the Social Ideal" in the Collection *What Future Awaits Mankind?*, Mir i Sotsializm Publishing House, Prague, 1964, pp. 303-14; and Y. M. Zhukov,

social progress? Briefly, it is those processes which lead in the last analysis to the emergence and perfecting of a new quality, to the ascent from the lower to the higher, and which possess definite phases and stages of change in both time and space.*

Such changes are always defined as positive ones. Their existence, however, and objective content do not depend on people or human consciousness, although these phenomena do pass through the human consciousness. These changes arise during the course of social development. Changes in social conditions are not brought about arbitrarily by people, but are the product of law-governed processes. This must not be confused with the doctrine of fatalism. History is made by people overcoming obstacles, who are faced with a variety of paths, forms and possibilities of development; the question of which of these gains the upper hand is decided by *the struggle of social forces, the classes*. It follows that progressive social development occurs when the people re-build reality, bearing in mind that they are always acting in a specific *environment by which they are conditioned*, on the basis of existing relations.

"The Concept of Progress in World History", Vestnik Akademii nauk S.S.S.R. No. 4 (1961), pp. 7-18.

* From the preceding it follows that such concepts as "change" and "development" are not identical. Similarly it would be wrong to identify "development" and "progress" which unfortunately occurs not only in popular literature (see V. G. Afanasyev's *Marxist Philosophy*, Moscow, pp. 123-24), but also in academic works (V. I. Svidersky, *Certain Questions Concerning Change and Development*, Russ. ed., Mysl Publishing House, 1965, p. 156). Development always denotes the emergence of something new but not necessarily a higher structure.

It is significant that those who support voluntarism in social life prefer to base their arguments on the arts, psychology and science, i.e., those fields in which the creative element of human activity is most evident. They are constantly exaggerating and distorting the role played by ideals, ignoring such questions as what arouses these ideals, what they are determined by and what is the "mechanism" of their effect on society. They do not accept that spiritual phenomena are conditioned by material circumstances, and as to the interaction of material and ideal factors, they make no distinction between that which is accidental and that which is necessary, between the essential and unimportant or between main and secondary factors. It would, incidentally, be a grave error to see art as something existing for its own sake isolated from the rest of life.

The arts are more than just "abstract knowledge". They are nourished by the springs of life and have their roots in its soil. The manifestations of life are many and varied, and each artist is presented with a vast choice, in accordance with his aim and talent. What is more, he does not reflect life and events neutrally, for his personal experience is bound to affect his cognition of reality.

This explains why true artists, basing themselves on former artistic experience, create something original, even when they are portraying very similar phenomena. Art is always a journey into the unknown. Here the paths leading to the truth are particularly varied. Each artist picks his own path to it by producing original and unrepeatable works, and these works warmed by the mind and heart of an inspired creator, live for a long time.

The originality of works of art does not mean, however, that they are not capable of being compared with others. One and the same age presents the artists of a given society with a wide range of tasks and problems. This explains the certain unity of tendencies followed by artists of a given period, which distinguishes the works of one age from those of another. It is common knowledge that in *similar historical conditions* different countries produce aesthetic phenomena, art forms and genres which are basically similar. For example, tragedy and comedy reach the height of their development at turning points in history.

Continuity also exists between the art of different periods. For example, once a new genre has appeared it builds up its own traditions in respect of subject matter, form and principles of artistic perception of reality. Behind the unrepeatable features of the artist's individual style one invariably catches a glimpse of something general and a certain repetition of genres, artistic principles and ideological tendencies. At the same time, the fact that these principles, genres and forms are capable of being repeated at different stages of social development does not mean a return to the past. This is true not only because the actual works produced in these genres, styles and forms at different periods are unrepeatable.

The crux of the matter is that artistic development takes the form of a spiral: each new stage reproduces or "repeats" the principles, styles, genres, etc., of the preceding one, but modifies and renews them in a new way and on a higher basis. This is why Herzen could say that "Italian painting (of the Renaissance—*author*) . . . had clearly returned to the Classical ideal of beauty; but a great advance had been made: the eyes of

the new ideal shone with a different profundity and thought. . . ."

The same phenomenon can also be observed in the history of the different art forms and genres. Take *War and Peace*, for example. In the process of working on the novel Tolstoi said that he was "writing an epic in the spirit of the *Iliad*". But this was not a return to the past and the art of "the childhood of the human race". Tolstoi's new epic was quite different from any former epic. It was bound to be for it contains the fruits of the achievements of a new stage in artistic development, especially those of the 19th-century novel with its "self-propelled" characters.** Tolstoi himself was well aware of this. He wrote: "You say that the *Iliad* is a great epic work—a historical panorama. . . ." And then went on: "The *Iliad* is simply the expression of the historical

* A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., USSR Academy of Sciences Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, Vol. 3, p. 35.

** Although the epic today frequently takes the compositional and stylistic form of the novel it would be wrong to ignore the specific characteristics of these two genres. The novel portrays the development of character in relation to society, and the epic deals with the formation of society itself during the most complex historical periods, generally turning-points in human history. Thus the novel always has a main character or group of characters, whereas in the epic the fate of individual characters is bound up with the course of historical events and is important not *per se*, but as a reflection of the "image of the people which is unified and integrated in spite of its many facets". In this connection it is characteristic that although Tolstoi conceived *War and Peace* originally as a chronicle of the nobility (all the characters belonged to one of three noble families: the Tolstois, Bolkonskys and Kurakins), he changed his mind when he began writing it and concentrated on the heroism of the Patriotic War of 1812 and changed his family novel into an epic in which the hero became the people.

consciousness of the people at a certain period in history.”*

Let us consider another example: in the nineties of the last century Gorky turned to the portrayal of the “lower classes” of the people and their sad lot in an exploiting society. He continued the great traditions of the democratic writers of the sixties and seventies, but this did not mean a return to the writing of G. Uspensky, Pomyalovsky and Reshetnikov. Gorky’s portrait of characters from the people is not only more penetrating and comprehensive but on a different ideological and artistic level. He breaks with the somewhat limited representation of everyday life common to Uspensky, Pomyalovsky and Reshetnikov, who confined themselves to writing about morals and manners, and concentrates his attention on the *rich spiritual world* of the vagabond, the unskilled labourer, their desire for a new life and their growing protest against social injustice. Although by no means everything is clear to these people, these “lower classes of society” in their search, they are gnawed by a great hunger for a new, happy life.

This was a great contribution to the development of both Russian and world literature. Gorky was the first to examine and master the literary achievements of his predecessors from the point of view of the revolutionary proletariat and to herald in the new communist culture.** The orig-

* L. N. Tolstoi, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 8, p. 326.

** Gorky was the first writer to see the heroism of the working class and became the passionate advocate of socialism. The main point is not simply that he made the working class the hero of his works. The fate of the proletariat and its struggle for social rights had been treated by earlier writers. One need only mention Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* or Zola’s *Germinal*. The point is that

inality of his writing was immediately appreciated by all those who had the interests of social and artistic progress at heart. "It is difficult to describe the enormously powerful effect which even Gorky's early writing had on Europe", wrote Stefan Zweig. Whereas in the works of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoi and Turgenev "Russian life is limited to the spiritual sphere, and the tortured awareness of one's own duality and the approaching turning-point in human history appear as the pangs of tormented conscience," in Gorky's writing "Russian people appear in flesh and blood, not in the spirit, as a human mass, not as obscure, nameless, isolated individuals, and this mass becomes an indisputable reality".*

Whilst they select that which is valuable from the past, the arts are never content with this alone. They forge on to new achievements, if we take the arts of different peoples, countries and continents, of individual artists not in isolation, but against the general background of historical development. This applies not only to external

Gorky was entirely free of all illusion contradicting the objective dialectic of social life. Whereas Victor Hugo placed his faith in the moral self-perfection of the individual, Gorky understood full well and showed in his writing that the individual can only attain true freedom through revolutionary struggle. Whereas Zola accepted biological determinism, Gorky was not content to depict "environment" and examine the individual as a product of certain social relations. He showed how people change social conditions and play an active part in the struggle against the world of evil and oppression. Nor did he limit himself to the theme of compassion for the poor. He showed the proletariat not simply as a victim, a suffering class, but as the standard-bearer of the new, socialist humanism.

* S. Zweig, *Collected Works* in 7 volumes, Pravda Publishing House, 1963, Vol. 7, pp. 355-56.

interaction, but to the development of artistic culture as a whole.

Ever since the transition from primitive society, in which national characteristics did not play a part, to class society the arts have always reflected the life of the country which produced them. And each country, large and small, makes its contribution to world artistic culture.

However, progress in the arts, as in every other sphere of human activity proceeds in a *contradictory way* and is frequently a round-about process. The founders of Marxism pointed out that here the economic factor does not operate automatically, and that certain periods in the development of the arts do not correspond to the economic development of society.

In spite of the fact that Russia was an economically weak and backward country during the first half of the 19th century, it produced an amazing blossoming of the arts. Russian 19th-century literature which emerged out of the most profound economic and class contradictions of a feudal society, and reflected the revolutionary protest of the masses against the despotism of autocracy and the tyranny of the landowners, produced a number of outstanding writers whose works continue to astound and delight mankind. Or take 18th-century Germany. Socially and economically it was in the process of decline, yet in the fields of philosophy and the arts it was at its peak, giving the world Goethe and Schiller, Kant, Fichte and Hegel. Small wonder that people referred to it then as "the country of philosophers and poets". Yet another illustration is to be found in the USA of the present day—a country with the most highly developed economy in the capitalist world. The same cannot be said of its artistic culture however.

It happens that countries differ widely from each other in their artistic level during one and the same period of time. This is explained by the fact that in an antagonistic society historical progress is *uneven*. This unevenness in its turn exacerbates the social conflicts which are connected with its main contradictions, making the picture of the artistic development of mankind an even more complex one. Even when countries embark on the building of socialism, which for the first time in human history guarantees the *planned* development of society, its economy and culture, they start at different levels of social, economic and cultural development, and this invariably affects their art for a certain length of time.

Finally, the twists and curves of historical artistic development reflect uneven development in the various spheres of intellectual life and of different elements and forms of artistic culture. *The history of art shows certain losses as well as gains*. Renaissance art, for example, lost the epic naiveté of the Ancient Greeks; classicism which reached its peak in 17th-century France, lost in feeling integrity and the stature of its characters compared to the Renaissance, but attained a considerably more profound understanding of social problems. Enlightenment art, full of noble civic themes, could not free itself from the rationalised schematisation of character, etc.

There are numerous other examples that one might quote, but the foregoing should suffice to show how things stand with the transitions and links which go to make up the single process of artistic development.

Attempts to show the history of art as a straight, ascendant line without difficulties, contradictions and losses, only serve to distort the

question. Those who persevere in this close their eyes to the fact that all anti-realist trends such as abstractionism, cubism and all the other "isms" divert the arts from their progressive development. They claim to be breaking new ground, whereas in fact these are just a rehash of the old theories of "the single stream" and a return to the view that the arts exist outside history and class.

Such an approach would imply that there have never been any crises in the arts in antagonistic societies, and that socialist artistic culture should absorb indiscriminately all elements of the past and present. No selection is necessary, they say. Everyone who thinks that the culture of the past must be approached *critically* is a hopeless reactionary and there is no place for him in the temple of the arts. Proletarian culture is so different from bourgeois culture that Lenin was able to speak of two nations in each bourgeois country and consequently of two opposing cultures in it.

Those who support absorption do not differentiate between the value of the ideological and aesthetic theories of the various schools and tendencies. They regard Repin and Malevich, Rodin and Kolder, Raphael and Salvador Dali as of the same value. For them artistic method is an empty word, and at best they interpret it metaphysically as the sum total of artistic devices, ignoring the artist's search for truth and its reflection in art. For them the criteria of progress in art and even the criteria of the ideological and aesthetic value of works of art do not exist. And all this is "motivated" by the complexity and unique nature of aesthetic phenomena and the complexity of the arts as a whole.

The development of the arts takes on highly complex forms indeed. But this applies to all

branches of human activity. None of the events which take place in society are the same: each of them is unique and original. Nevertheless we are fully justified in speaking of a certain regularity of phenomena and events.

The Marxist View of Formations
and the Development of Arts

The strength of Marxist-Leninist teaching indeed lies in the fact that it was the first to reveal that there is an inner law-governed connection in the chaos of social events and gave scholars an objective criterion with the aid of which they are able to trace the course of those events, and understand the general trend of their development and the connection between one stage of historical development and another. This objective criterion is the Marxist-Leninist concept of the socio-economic formation. Lenin criticised Mikhailovsky's "subjective sociology", pointing out that it was putting the cart before the horse to begin a sociological inquiry with the questions what is society and what is progress. "Where will you get a conception of society and progress in general," wrote Lenin, "if you have not studied a single social formation in particular, if you have not even been able to establish this conception, if you have not even been able to approach a serious factual investigation, and objective analysis of social relations of any kind?"* Indeed, to understand the progressive development of society one must understand the transition from one socio-economic formation to another, higher one. Otherwise it is impossible to distinguish the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow 1960, p. 144.

unbroken line of social progress in all its connections and transitions.

What is a socio-economic formation? The definition one so often comes across, that it is a specific, historically determined form of production relations, seems to me a rather narrow one. Economic relations are undoubtedly at the base of a socio-economic formation, but they are not the only determinant factor. Lenin stressed the fact that although Marx singled out economic relations as the most important, he showed the capitalist socio-economic formation as a living organism, with its whole superstructure, everyday elements and different forms of social consciousness, and that he showed it in the process of developing, in all its economic, political and spiritual aspects.

In short, a socio-economic formation is an *integrated*, living organism, developing in space and time, and not a speculative category, a conventional concept.*

A socio-economic formation is a concept with objective content, and is characterised by the common features of both the material, and political and spiritual life of nations in the *same stage* of historical development. After all, if we forget for the moment about the society of the

* It may reasonably be assumed that the slave-holding states arose in the fourth millennium B.C. and continued right down to 300-500 A.D. The feudal era in Europe lasted from the fall of the Western Roman Empire down to the bourgeois revolutions in France and England (18th century). In the Caucasus it lasted from the 4th century to the 1870s; in Central Asia from the 7th or 8th century to 1917; and in China from the time of the Han Empire to the 20th century. The transition from capitalism to socialism began with the Russian Revolution of October 1917 and constitutes the essence of the present age.

primitive commune when spiritual life was not properly developed, we can see that every socio-economic formation in history has had its own particular form of prevailing ideology, and at times its spiritual centre too. Thus, in the Middle Ages the spiritual centre in Europe was the Catholic Church, while in East and Central Asia it was Buddhism, and in the Near and Middle East and North Africa it was Islam.

The fact that certain common features can be observed in the economic and cultural life of all peoples at a given stage of socio-economic development gives Marxists every right to apply the term "socio-economic formation" to social structures of the same type, and sub-divide this concept into different stages, periods, and phases.*

The concept of socio-economic formations can be applied perfectly well to culture too. One has only to compare the art of primitive society with that of classical antiquity, medieval art with Renaissance art, or the art of the Enlightenment with socialist realist art to see the common features shared by the various works of one and the same socio-economic formation and also what distinguishes them from those of other formations. This is greatly assisted by a comparative historical analysis of the aesthetic phenomena of different countries, provided that these phenomena are attributed to a particular stage on the basis of objective criteria and not according to personal fancy.

* The Marxist-Leninist doctrine of formations presupposes as an indispensable condition the study of the basic steps of its dialectical development—eras including the sum total of variegated phenomena—typical and untypical, large and small, that are present to some degree in all countries. (See: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 36-37).

It is impossible however to fix the direction of artistic development purely by an empirical comparison of artistic phenomena and facts. Comparative historical analysis of these phenomena, however correctly carried out, can do no more than produce tentative premises. The most important thing here is to study the laws of development of each particular socio-economic formation and their reflection in art and, hence, the inherent (specific) laws of art itself, examining the mechanism of their action, aesthetic tastes and demand, and the genres and forms of art in each era separately. It is essential that they be studied not in isolation, but as an organic whole with all their interrelations, since the opportunities for artistic progress in a particular era cannot be judged from the development of individual art forms or genres.

The theoreticians who deny progress in art specialise in "refuting" the existence of *general* laws governing the artistic development, or of *common* features in the artistic development of different countries and peoples in similar conditions. They gloss over the continuity and unity of the world artistic process, and either compare one people's art as a whole with another people's art as a whole, or reduce the history of culture to the mechanical sum of separate cultures ("local civilisations", "super-systems"), each isolated and parochial. Each of them denies in his own way the objective substance of the Marxist concept of "socio-economic formation" and its importance for understanding the historical development of art, or even the necessity of general concepts in scholarly enquiry at all.

Naturally, in art just as in any other sphere of social activity, no *general concept* is capable of

being extended to embrace the mass of individual phenomena and all their features. Nevertheless, by grasping the main, essential features common to similar phenomena, a general concept enables us to gain a deeper understanding of each individual phenomenon (not in isolation from but in relation to others in the process of historical development), and make out the general course of all spheres of social life. As Lenin wrote: "For objective dialectics there *is* an absolute *within* the relative"*.

This proposition of Lenin's is also extremely important for understanding the nature of progress in art. Only by adopting this approach are we able to go from studying separate countries and periods to discerning the general trends in the universal historical process of the development of art.

For example, slave-holding society developed over several eras, and itself took shape within the primitive commune. The discoveries of Heinrich Schliemann, Wilhelm Dörpfeld and Sir Arthur Evans proved beyond any doubt that the archaic and classical periods were indeed preceded by the "Golden Age" (the epithet Homer applied to Mycenae) of Creto-Mycenaean (Aegean) culture.** This civilisation was destroyed by invaders about 1200 B. C. never to recover. Yet the cultural achievements of Crete and Mycenae did not

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 360.

** Mycenae was "golden" both literally (excavation revealed numerous works of art made of gold) and figuratively, if we bear in mind its high achievements in architecture, decorative art, vase painting, and statuettes. Connected in its later stages with primitive slave-holding society and the agrarian commune, it is in many ways reminiscent of the culture of the Ancient East; yet it retained an essentially original culture of its own.

vanish without trace. They played an important part in the formation of the culture of antiquity, which reached its apogee in Ancient Greece of the classical age.

In the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages, at the point where a new art was arising on the ruins of the Roman Empire, the artistic values of the Ancient Greeks were not destroyed like the great values of Aegean civilisation were, but were carefully preserved. Byzantium is especially interesting in this respect because of the important role it played in helping Renaissance Europe rediscover the joyous world of Ancient Greece. It was no accident that Byzantium played such a tremendous role in the cultural life of Europe and the Near East during the early Middle Ages. Byzantine art at that time was being invaded by a new spirit, which was to become typical of medieval art as a whole with its dualism of body and spirit, its increasingly complicated artistic forms and idioms, its subtle symbolism and so on. As compared with the art of antiquity, Byzantine art reveals a greater interest in man's spiritual world: numerous moral aspects and problems found a place in art for the first time. Quite a lot was lost too: Byzantine art "amputated" the physical beauty of Ancient Greek art, putting the stress on the spirit at the expense of the flesh.

These two facts—and there are many more—show quite clearly that the history of the arts was not without its losses and even steps backwards. However, on the whole mankind's artistic development advanced along the path of progress. This only becomes really clear when Byzantine culture is examined in the context of the whole development of the feudal formation, and Aegean culture is seen in the context of *the whole development of slave-holding society*, the development

that is of *all its classes*; if we examine not its separate features, but its essential phenomena, the inherent factors of its development. Otherwise the very idea of "an age" is deprived of any serious meaning, and the history of nations becomes what Herder referred to as the activity of ants, in other words, complete chaos.

It is not enough to refer exclusively to individual periods, and still less to individual works in studying progress in art.

Thus, for example, the main trend called socialist realism includes works of varying artistic merit and artists of very different creative abilities. An artistic method is not a substitute for talent. There is no point in an artist who lacks talent expecting an artistic method to come to his rescue. At the same time we have only to trace the historical development of socialist realist art to see the unlimited opportunities which this method opens up to talented artists, and how progressive it is.

We have already mentioned how artistic progress involves a search for a more adequate reflection of *concrete historical reality*. We know that history first came to have a place in art in the Renaissance period, freeing art from mysticism and the hand of fate. Since then history has been thought of as "time". Socialist realist art takes a step further, and conceives of "time" as history. It was the method of socialist realism that first made possible *the concrete historical cognisance of reality* in art, freeing the artist from abstract principles in his treatment of events and characters.* Socialist realism thus requires both historical

* In discussing Lev Tolstoi's works Lenin underlined that even for this outstanding 19th-century realist "a definite, concretely historical presentation of the question was something absolutely foreign" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 50). In his approach to understanding life and the

awareness on the part of the artist and a correct transference into artistic images of the important events of history, the struggle between old and

development of the personality Tolstoi usually applied certain abstract principles, especially non-resistance to evil. This was bound to impose certain limitations on his positive characters.

In this Tolstoi was like Dostoyevsky, who also portrayed man through the prism of "eternal moral principles" of good and evil, although Tolstoi's actual approach to typification (given similar ideological principles and creative method) was different from Dostoyevsky's. For Dostoyevsky, who describes the capitalist town, the main problem was the tragedy of the individual wilting under the yoke of egoism, whereas for Tolstoi the main thing was the inner protest of the human soul against egoism and arbitrary rule. Dostoyevsky was mainly concerned with the *deformation* of the human personality in the exploiting society, Tolstoi, with its *rebirth* through freedom from the lie of feudal and bourgeois civilisation.

But having revealed the relationship between the individual and social conditions, the tragic contradictions of reality and painful search for spiritual renewal, the critical realist writers, even such outstanding talents as Tolstoi and Dostoyevsky, were not free from the burden of abstraction and utopianism, which in turn led them to be somewhat one-sided in depicting the historical process and their positive heroes. There is always an aura of mystery around Dostoyevsky's heroes. They have split personalities. Tolstoi, on the other hand, saw the people as the decisive force in history, but saw them as "the chaos of will", "blind elements". Only a new age which brought the revolutionary proletariat armed with Marxism-Leninism into the forefront of the historical stage enabled artists to *consciously* approach a concrete historical appreciation and depiction of reality.

Socialist realist art greatly widened the horizons of artistic apperception of reality. Its hero is the people in their revolutionary development, and its "setting" is the whole historical process of the revolutionary transformation of the world. This introduces a fundamental change in the conception of the moral and artistic development of the personality, in the principles of cognising and treating all phenomena of life, and in the structure of artistic images in art.

new. Characters are seen in their historical context, against the background of *the decisive trends and the outlook* for the future of social development. Socialist realism thus helps the artist understand the general trend of events and saves him from losing his way in the chaos of personal impressions and feelings. It gives the artist a clear purpose, putting him on his guard against subjectivism or fatalism, and providing the perfect basis for the all-round development of talent, personal inclination and ability.

Generally speaking, it is best to judge the creative potential of art in any given historical period by its greatest concrete achievements, without losing sight of the fact that the pyramid has a base. Artistic geniuses do not appear out of the blue. But, as Plekhanov so rightly noted, it is they who "give the highest expression to the prevailing aesthetic trend in a particular society or class".* Thus it is usually the biggest stars that stand out most brightly on the horizon of artistic creation, all the others forming their historical background.

We can pick out a handful of great writers in the history of cultural development who, thanks to circumstances, experience, and outstanding talent reflected most fully and profoundly in their works the age they lived in (in all cases a turning-point in the social and cultural development of society). There was Homer in the archaic period of antiquity, Dante in the Middle Ages, Shakespeare during the time of the Renaissance, and Gorky in the period of the proletarian revolutions.** It would be wrong however to set the

* G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. VII, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925, pp. 219-20 ("The Development of the Monistic View of History").

** The work of all of them is inseparable from the laws of social life, the class struggle in their age, and

standard at the level of the very greatest talents and leave it at that. Recognition of the unity and community of ideological trends and creative aspirations of various artists in each age has nothing to do with levelling talent. Each has his own personal logic of inner development, and each one has his own awareness of the world and of his own particular age with its own unique features. Moreover, the experience any single artist can accumulate, however great a genius he may be, is limited, and this imposes historical limitations on the art produced in any particular era.

It is *universal historical practice* in its totality and in continuous historical development that is the absolute criterion of aesthetic significance. This thesis is the corner-stone of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. It means that the progress of the arts must be seen on a large canvas, that the role of every nation must be seen in the general historical process of artistic development at every single stage, that every age must be understood in relation to earlier and subsequent development, as a link in the universal chain of mankind's artistic progress. This approach, and this alone, enables us to appreciate, for example, the position of Shakespeare and English literature as a whole in the Renaissance, and the universal historical significance of the Renaissance in the cultural development of mankind, and to establish that other peoples with strong cultural traditions also had a Renaissance in the same sense as Europe did in the 14th-16th centuries. Thus, many facts indicate

the life of the people. More than this: society, the classes mould the artist in all spheres of social life, including art, producing a definite *type of artist*. Thus the problem of the progressive development of art is linked through the activity of prominent artists with the objective demands of social development.

that there was just such a period in China in the 8th-12th centuries, and among the peoples of Central Asia, Iran and North-West India in the 9th-12th centuries.*

Of course it would be wrong to transfer wholesale the features of European art to Eastern countries. Suffice it to say that religious themes were completely absent from Chinese painting of the T'ang and Sung empires, whereas in European Renaissance art the new outlook on reality was frequently expressed through biblical subjects from the Old and New Testament. The Chinese artists also had different notions of perspective and composition (they did not have light and shade, for example). Finally, the Chinese theatre with its various conventions had no parallel in Europe, while the sculpture of the T'ang and Sung periods was not noted for its strength and vitality. Even within Europe we do not find total uniformity. Thus, to take literature as our example, in Italy it was the novella, in Germany publicistic writing, and in England the drama that flourished. Religious and social problems were widely debated in Germany, but had nothing like the same importance in Italy. One could cite many more examples.

All this is perfectly understandable. What is surprising, however, is the striking similarity between the major trends in the art of the peoples of Europe and the Far East in the age which D. Vasari first labelled (speaking of Europe) the "Renaissance". In both cases we observe an interest in classical antiquity, an attempt to study it intensively and to apply its lessons, emphasis on

* N. I. Konrad, "The Middle Ages in Historical Science", in the Collection *History of Socio-Political Ideas*, USSR Academy of Sciences Publishing House, Moscow, 1955, pp. 77-80.

man and "humanism", freedom of thought, a rapid development of the towns and urban arts, a tendency for the leading artists of the day to gather in the towns. This makes it possible to examine such individual writers of various peoples as Petrarch, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Li Bo, Tu Fu, Su Tung-p'o, Ou-yang Hsin, Firdousi, Sa'di of Shiraz, and Hafiz in the framework of a single historical era, and understand not separate, isolated facts, but the basic features of and trends in the arts of that period, in connection with the socio-economic development of society and the history of the whole formation.* This enables us to gain a deeper understanding both of the individual artists and the art of the various peoples, and their contribution to world art as a whole. Naturally, this requires the study of what was new about Renaissance art as compared with the art of earlier periods, and to what extent it influenced the subsequent artistic development the world over. Here we must stress *the world over*, of all lands and nations, for mankind as a whole is the subject of historical development, including the development of the arts.

Engels pointed out that it is quite impossible to observe progressive development in a narrow, local range of phenomena, especially in the various spheres of abstract thought, or of the arts. "The further the sphere of our enquiry is from economics, and the nearer it comes to pure, abstract ideology, the greater we shall find the role of chance in its development and the more uneven its graph is." However, Engels continues, "if you draw in the central axis of the curve,

* N. I. Konrad, "Notes on the Meaning of History", *Vestnik istorii mirovoi kultury (World Culture Review)*, No. 2, 1961, pp. 27-29.

you will find that the longer the period studied or the wider the sphere studied, the closer this axis comes to the axis of economic development, and the more parallel it runs to it".*

The arts happen to be the sphere of social relations furthest removed from production. Only in the primitive tribal society, the pre-history of art in the true sense of the word, do we find artistic activity closely connected with production, with the stages of its development corresponding to the stages of development of material production. Later art and production are only linked at the base. Moreover, art reflects the base through politics and other forms of social consciousness as well as directly, and this is what makes the progressive development of art so uneven. What is more, it should be borne in mind that new trends do not apply to the whole sphere of artistic creation as soon as they arise. At first they cover only a part of the "trajectory", and on other sections—often for a very long time—everything continues as before. In different countries of a particular formation the arts arise and develop in special historical conditions, influencing and being influenced in turn by the art of other peoples.

It therefore becomes essential in determining the type of art that corresponds to each socio-economic formation to examine thoroughly *the concrete forms in which the basic features, trends and regularities of the arts appear in the various countries and at various stages of the socio-economic formation*. This is in any case important because as Lenin wrote, "...while the develop-

* Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 39, p. 176 (Letter from Engels to V. Borgius, Jan. 25, 1894).

ment of world history as a whole follows general laws it is by no means precluded, but, on the contrary, presumed, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities in either the form or the sequence of this development."* In other words, in certain conditions peoples can bypass both stages in the framework of a particular formation and whole formations in its development along the path of historical progress. This is illustrated by the way many peoples of the Soviet Union have come straight from pre-capitalist, and in many cases tribal societies to socialism.

The type of socio-economic formation makes it possible to establish from a universal historical position *the direction* of society's socio-economic, political, and cultural (including artistic) development, and perceive and understand in the variety of historical forms their socio-economic essence at one and the same stage in the historical process, their inherent laws. Analysis of the concrete forms in which these laws appear helps us trace the different paths that have led to the emergence of a particular formation with its particular art, understand the formation with all its wealth of national and historical features and, taking each country separately, examine the inner and outer conditions of the formation, its basis, its whole superstructure, culture and art. Thus, although the arts in the slave-holding formation arose on the basis of a common ideological and social structure, there were local features. Ancient Greece, the Ancient East and Rome each had specific features of their own determined by their entire social reality.

It is an indisputable historical fact that slave-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 477.

holding in the despotic Eastern states was characterised by strong survivals from the tribal system, by the absolute authority of the ruler, who was supreme sovereign lord of all the land of the village communes, while the majority of free men had no rights whatsoever. It was characterised equally by extremely slow socio-economic development. In Ancient Greece on the other hand, social development was quicker and all free men actively participated in political life. For a long time society rested largely on the small peasant farmer and the independent artisan and free men tended to retain their independence. This situation produced a special ideology and art.*

Man's aesthetic relations to reality were far more primitive in Ancient Egypt than in Athens. In Egypt mythology had not yet broken away from totem-worship, and art was largely controlled by the priesthood and was chiefly concerned with deifying the lords of the land, leaving little room for individuality. In Athens on the other hand, the mythology was anthropomorphic and art depicted ordinary people: it was infused with patriotism and civic ideals, was open to all free men, and was characterised by an astounding clarity, harmoniousness, and variety of forms, by "noble simplicity and calm grandeur" as Winckelmann put it. At the same time, the art of the Ancient East represented an im-

* When the society of antiquity was at its height, peasants and artisans did not scorn productive labour, and free men did not consider work humiliating. The labour of free men had not yet been ousted by slave labour. For further details on production and the division of labour in Ancient Greek society, see *Universal History*, Russ. ed., Vol. II, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1956, pp. 40-46.

portant step forward from the art of primitive society. This was expressed above all in the portrayal of man, the development of artistic feelings, and the new demands people made on art. The Egyptian pyramid, the Mesopotamian ziggurat, and the great achievements of the Assyrian, Chinese and Indian animalists are among the finest works of world culture, bearing as they do the stamp of these ancient peoples' genius.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the art of the various peoples of the Ancient East was far from being homogeneous. Thus architecture was little developed in Mesopotamia (only the ziggurats are at all impressive), whereas in Egypt it was very developed; the art of the Phoenicians was not very original, whereas Greek art was brilliantly unique. Moreover, every formation and each of the individual countries it includes has its own concrete artistic forms corresponding to particular stages in their social and artistic development, not forgetting the relative independence of art, and of its various forms, styles and genres.

One should avoid being schematic in any form of inquiry, but this applies especially to aesthetics. One cannot help noticing, for example, that various genres are not confined to a particular formation but frequently exist as a vital creative tradition, in several socio-economic formations simultaneously. Even when they lose their vitality, these genres do not pass away entirely, but remain as a cultural legacy, reflecting a distinctive period in mankind's artistic development.

Let us take, for example, the heroic national epic in its classical form. It originated in the period when the tribal system was breaking down, but we find it in later periods, in certain conditions. Thus, the Russian *byliny*, which incorpo-

rate elements of tribal legends, developed as a qualitatively new stage in the artistic development of the Eastern Slavs at the time when Ancient Rus was emerging. The nucleus of the *byliny*, with their heroic motifs, goes back to the 10th and first half of the 11th centuries.* Though the stimuli of the epic tradition grew weaker in the next period of feudal disintegration, the genre was not abandoned.** With the struggle against the tatar invasion (13-15th centuries) the *byliny* epic got a new lease of life and continued to develop right down to the 16th century, when the historical song replaced it as the most important folk literature genre. We do not propose to get involved in the arguments over the stages of formation and development of the *byliny* epic, how it differs from the historical song, when the historical song emerged and how it influenced *byliny* and other genres. It is worth noting however that from the 16th century on *byliny* are as a rule no longer based on concrete reality but on legendary and folk-tale themes. *Byliny* still exist as a cultural legacy.

The heroic epic had essentially the same development among other peoples. Naturally there were certain differences dictated by various local conditions. There were epics born in the early stages of the formation of slave-holding society, such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; others, like the Scandinavian and Irish sagas, or the Anglo-

* B. A. Rybakov, *Ancient Rus: Legends and Byliny, and the Chronicles*, USSR Academy of Sciences Publishing House, 1963.

** There is disagreement among Soviet scholars on the development of the *byliny* epics in the period of feudal disintegration. Some are of the view that the epic tradition was on the decline at that time, while others hold that it continued to develop in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Saxon *Beowulf* and so on, belong to the period of early feudalism in the West; while yet others emerged on the basis of nomad life in the conditions of feudal relations, such as the *Alpamysh*, *Manas*, *Jangar* and so on.

Nevertheless, despite all their originality, the heroic epics of various peoples had a great deal in common as regards interpretation of reality (depiction of the people and their heroism through the hero and his feats, the principle of exaggeration and idealisation, the way the hero's form and content coincide); as regards the moral and ideological principles in depicting events and the characters of the heroes (the feeling of brotherhood, honour, civic duty, loyalty to their country and people); as regards the composition (slow narrative, contrapositioning of contending forces, portrayal of the hero through his emotions and speech, sketchy treatment of secondary characters and so on); as regards style (stereotype forms, repetition, especially of epithets, insistence on minute detail); as regards the genre structure ("epic time", development of the action according to the hero's whim), etc. The national heroic epos continued as an independent genre right down to the emergence of the *developed* (national or multinational) centralised state. From then on it merely remains as a cultural legacy.

Any art form or artistic form that emerges only develops according to the demands of a particular society and period, its artistic tastes and aesthetic feelings. Obviously artistic forms that belong to the past do in fact "belong" there, and are quite impossible in our day and age.*

* From this, some theoreticians have gone on to deduce, following in Hegel's footsteps, that art altogether is declining in the modern age.

A number of works have appeared over the last few

This is why the theory of art demands a concrete historical approach to aesthetic phenomena and the development of art, and examination of its historical stages.

At the same time, it would be wrong to isolate certain links in the chain. The distinctive features of each age must be examined, but without losing sight of the inner link between ages, stages and periods in the artistic development of mankind. Moreover, the artists of various periods (and even of the same one) ought not to be judged "wholesale" by the same standard. It is essential to pick out the *progressive* thread in art, for side by side with the succulent fruit on the mighty tree of art there are also rotten, worm-eaten fruits.

The development of art is governed by common laws which appear in a distinctive manner in each socio-economic formation. The epistemological essence of art is its correct reflection of

years advancing the idea that "mass culture" and such means of its diffusion as the cinema, wireless and television, lead to the decline of art, since real art is here replaced by pedestrian imitations, spiritual drugs and poison. This diagnosis happens to be correct. The capitalist monopolies are indeed propagating and spreading ersatz art, which like a boa-constrictor strangles the individual with its insistence on horror and the seamy side of life, or paints a distorted picture of capitalist reality, touching it up and embellishing it. Yet this does not mean that all art is declining. Many artists, even in capitalist society, take the interests of the people to heart and create fine works of art. Moreover, the cinema, wireless and television, those remarkable inventions of human genius, do not, in themselves, have a funereal influence on art. On the contrary, they enrich it, and are a stimulus to new kinds as well as new forms of artistic production, which can play a tremendous positive role in educating the masses, as is illustrated by the example of the socialist countries. What counts in the final analysis is the ends the cinema, wireless and television serve, and who controls them.

reality in artistic images. This indeed is what distinguishes art from all forms of "reverse world view", as Marx put it, from all and every formalist trick and device.*

Decadent art lies outside the mainstream of *historical progress*. It is either brain-spun, or draws a picture of life where man is condemned forever to the "vicious circle" of exploiting society and is inevitably doomed. There is no essential progress in its history, and it is therefore not surprising that there should be both aestheticians and sociologists who try to create a theoretical basis for this practice by claiming that the process of change in the sphere of spiritual culture is "undefined" and undefinable. Here, they claim, chance rules supreme, everything depends on personality and determinism in the sphere of spiritual culture does not and cannot exist.

This is typical of those theoreticians who approach the matter from the point of view of the formula: either determinism or conscious activity, admitting no third possibility. They criticise the Marxists too from this mistaken standpoint, claiming that by admitting the law-governed nature of social changes, Marxists are denying human aspirations and cultural values. In actual fact, however, dialectical and historical materialism differs from vulgar materialism in that it holds that the objective laws of history act not independently of man but through people with their conscious awareness, desires and feelings** setting themselves and carrying out definite aims,

* See Marx and Engels, *On the Critique of Hegelian Philosophy of Right*, Introduction, *Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. I, p. 414.

** See V. S. Kemenov, *Articles on Art*, Iskusstvo Publishers, 1956.

also in the sphere of the arts. Marx and Engels proved long ago that artistic judgments made independently of historical determinism are invalid. Lenin wrote that the determinist view of history "makes a strict and correct appraisal possible instead of attributing everything you please to free will".*

Indeed, cultural values, including art, and especially judgments about progress in culture and the arts, are bound to include judgment of things, and this judgment varies greatly from person to person. We do not deny the fact that aesthetic judgments are relative, being in the long run conditioned by circumstances pertaining to the social life of individuals, classes and social groups. Nonetheless, a consistent objective scientific analysis of artistic phenomena and cultural values and comparative examination of them in terms of the concepts of "progress" and "regression" contains an objective truth, a content of knowledge which, according to Lenin's definition, does not depend on the consciousness of the individual, classes or mankind as a whole. Of course all progressive changes in the sphere of spiritual culture pass through people's minds and are performed by people. But, for a start, these values exist in their own right, objectively, outside human mind. Moreover all progressive changes take place irrespective of people's opinion of them. Then the aims men set themselves are in the long run the product of social conditions, which also develop objectively. Lastly, the social position of the subject making a judgment is not purely the result of personal feelings and subjective fancy, but is objectively determined. Thus, only by revealing the law-governed con-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 159.

nctions and relationships between aesthetic phenomena, and the trends of their general historical development can we understand and explain the objective, concrete historical substance of these aesthetic judgements, reveal their social significance, man's aesthetic relations to reality and the way in which they are conditioned by the nature of the social order and life of the given society.

Nor is this all. It is not enough to determine the causal relation between aesthetic phenomena and the base that produced them. Art in any society is determined in the final analysis by the economic situation. It would, however, be wrong to see economics as the only force at work. All periods of social life are different and cannot be reduced to a common denominator. Besides, even in one and the same period the tastes of individuals and social groups, and hence the demands they make on art vary, and are met in various ways. The art of every nation and people within the framework of a particular formation or age has its own *specific features* (which are a component part of the world art).

Consequently, it is essential to embrace the whole wealth of artistic forms and investigate their complex relationships both within art and between art and other forms of social consciousness, including politics, in other words investigate *integral system* of aesthetic demands and relationships that arise on a *particular economic* basis.

This is dictated for a start by the fact that conditions for the development of art vary considerably from age to age. Some ages favour a flourishing of the art; while others are unfavourable. Thus, in slave-holding society art reached its apogee in 5th-century Athens. By the 4th cen-

tury slave labour had almost entirely replaced that of free men, Athenian democracy was in a state of crisis, and art headed for decline. By the end of the 4th century, with the beginning of the Hellenistic period, art was less and less rooted in the people and the decline set in. Naturally this decline did not mean the end of art. To this period belong not only decadent works but also the plays of Menander, while in painting the landscape, still-life and portrait genres emerged. Thus even in periods of decline we can observe crisis and decay in some spheres of art and the growth of new values in others.

However, even the finest works bore the stamp of decline. Despite the lively gallery of characters he created, Menander never rose to the great heights of typification characteristic of his predecessors. More important, Hellenistic culture seems to go backwards: superstition was on the increase with belief in magic and fortune-telling occupying a more prominent position. Nor is this characteristic only of the Hellenistic period of decline. Thus the art of the Renaissance in its period of decline turned back to abstract rhetoric, metaphysical preoccupations and the separation of the ideal from reality which characterised its early stages.

It has long since been observed that a higher rung of the ladder of historical progress can make a less weighty contribution to world culture than the one it supercedes.

Thus, with the general progressive development of art, it is necessary to take stock of the potentialities of artistic progress and the objective possibility of their realisation in each particular age. Goethe, one of the first to suggest that national literatures should be studied as part and parcel of the whole process of mankind's artistic de-

velopment made the following profound remark: "Any genius, even the very greatest loses from his period in some of his works, and, on the other hand, in certain circumstances gains from it".*

Clearly every new historical age opens up new, wider prospects for the artistic development of mankind. The potential is greater than in the preceding age if only for the reason that it has that much more to draw on, in producing something new and important. But the extent to which the potential is realised is determined by the level of development of socio-economic relations, by *which class* plays the decisive role in the period, the nature of the social system, the level of democracy and so on. In short, *objective conditions in a particular age can either further or hinder the realisation of the potential historical development of art.*

Society can only give full rein to the universal wealth of "man's essential being" when social class antagonisms and their consequences have been abolished along with all forms of social inequality. Only then will human progress—to use Marx's apt definition—cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.** This universal wealth of man's essential being is only possible in the conditions of *communist civilisation*.

There is no doubt that aesthetic judgments change and improve and the theory of social and artistic progress is enriched and improved in the process of development of scientific and artistic knowledge. But this does not mean that it is impossible to compare individual works and the arts

* Goethe, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Moscow, 1937, Russ. ed., p. 405 (*Literary Sans-culotism*).

** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 358.

as a whole in different ages. The results of artistic development exist in the form of concrete artistic values, objectively, in other words on their own and not in people's minds. It is thus possible to compare them objectively with one another against the background of universal historical artistic practice, which determines what is *universal* in art and what is *temporary*, ephemeral, and shows the degree of "universality" present in the artistic values of any given age.* At the same time history proves beyond any doubt that *world art advances in its dialectically contradictory manner on the whole from simple aesthetic relations to higher, more complicated ones*. This process is an endless one. For dialectical philosophy, wrote Engels, "nothing is final, absolute, sacred . . . except the . . . endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher".**

But what are aesthetic relations, and what is their inner structure? What is the objective criterion of progress in art applicable to the various ages within a particular formation, or to various formations, as well as to the art of individual artists, or trends and schools in art?

These are all important questions, and as long as they remain unanswered it is difficult to find one's way among the intricate web of social phenomena and understand art's place among them. These questions need to be investigated separately

* Here we enter the sphere of the relationship between relative and absolute truth, the dialectic of which is so clearly and fully revealed in Marxist-Leninist philosophy. For details of this as it applies to art see M. Rozenal in *Literaturny Kritik* No. 5, 1938, and his foreword to G. V. Plekhanov's collection of articles *Art and Literature*, published by Goslitizdat Publishing House, Moscow, 1939.

** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 363.

both in their logical and concrete historical aspects. For now we shall merely note that the objective criterion of the value and significance of aesthetic phenomena should be sought *in history itself*, that is, in the development of the world artistic practice throughout history, and in socio-aesthetic ideals, which are formed during the objective process of social development. These ideals arise as a reflection of the essential requirements of social development, and their very existence shows that there are individuals, social groups and classes in social life striving to improve it as best they can. The latter are the progressive social forces.

* * *

Polemics in aesthetics on progress in art have been going on for decades. Some accept the idea, others deny that there is such a thing as progress in art.*

The supporters of the so-called "cyclical" concept have collected any amount of "evidence" against the progressive development theory. Yet none of this evidence refutes progress in social life and art: it merely destroys over-simplified, metaphysical treatment of it.

The Marxist theory of development has nothing in common with the positivist, non-dialectical concepts of progress, or vulgar evolutionist theories. Marxist theory is dialectical in its very essence and always adheres strictly to facts. This is its strength.

* N. Parsadanov studies briefly the history of ideas on progress and art in his book *On the Progressive Nature of the Development of Art*, Sovietsky Khudozhnik Publishers, Moscow, 1964.

A. A. Bazhenova

AESTHETIC CULTURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL
AND SOCIETY

Man is an artist by nature. He strives constantly to bring beauty into his life in some way or other.

M. Gorky

The problem of Art and Society is an extremely broad and many-sided one. It embraces an examination of the aesthetic relationship between man and society in all its aspects: ontological, epistemological, functional and practical. The key to the problem is to be found in the social conditioning of aesthetic appreciation and experience, i.e., the fact that they are determined by the given form of society and social relations.

A factor of equal importance is an epistemological approach to the problem in the form of an analysis of the cognitive aspects of man's aesthetic relationship to reality and a study of human aesthetic cognition.

The social function of aesthetic activity and the social effect of aesthetic appreciation and experience on the environment, the society and the individual are all closely related to the afore-mentioned aspects of the problem in hand. All these questions are of extreme practical and theoretical importance and interest. Here we propose to limit ourselves to an examination of the influence which human aesthetic activity has on the all-round balanced development of the individual, in particular his aesthetic appreciation and tastes, by facilitating changes in natural and

social environment and the creation of a new humanitarian world.

The social environment in which a person lives and acts is not something fixed and abstract. As a result of his activities man is able to change the natural conditions in which he exists and create new material and spiritual conditions for society and the individual. By changing his environment man also changes himself. His creative attitude to the world manifests itself in all the spheres of his activity, one of the most vivid and specific of which is the sphere of his aesthetic assimilation of reality which manifests itself most fully in the arts.

Interacting with nature, the physical environment, and with the whole of human culture, people approach that which surrounds them not only from a utilitarian, but from an aesthetic standpoint, in the light of their notions about what is beautiful and ugly.

Man's aesthetic faculty, his aesthetic sense and taste develop like all his other faculties, as a result of practical experience, the interaction of man and society, in the process of which he realises one of his "essential" powers giving material form to his aesthetic faculty. "Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form—in short, *senses* capable of human gratification, senses confirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being."^{*}

In bringing about an aesthetic transformation of his environment and shaping it in accordance

* Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, 1967, p. 101.

with his aesthetic taste, man realises one of his "essential" powers and gives material form to his aesthetic faculty. This aesthetic re-organisation of the environment in its turn exerts a strong aesthetic influence on man himself, human consciousness and psychology, the development of the individual as a whole and the appearance of new aesthetic requirements.

The links between human aesthetic appreciation and society are many and varied. With the development of production techniques and technology, the infiltration of beauty into everyday life and work is becoming an important factor in the aesthetic education of the individual. Design and reproduction techniques, etc., have made it possible to improve the general aesthetic level of man's environment. The increasing attention which is being paid to aesthetically pleasing living and working conditions, to improving the design of instruments and machinery and goods in general is gradually and systematically influencing man's aesthetic awareness. It is, therefore, extremely important from a sociological point of view that industrial and technical design should be approached scientifically, taking into account the psycho-physiological laws of aesthetic perception and the objective "laws of beauty". The aesthetic culture of work, everyday life and leisure have a direct effect on the formation of the aesthetic requirements of the individual, as well as on the improvement of production methods and work conditions.

Great importance is attached in the Soviet Union to the aesthetic organisation of material, everyday environment as a means of developing man's aesthetic awareness, improving his living conditions and raising his aesthetic culture. This active policy of using all the latest technological

advances to improve design is a most progressive factor in the development of aesthetic appreciation in the individual and society as a whole. Although industrial design and the applied arts, which are a part of the social environment created by man, play an important role in the aesthetic development of the individual they are by no means the only factors, nor the most decisive ones. Design and other related means of beautifying everyday life only promote the aesthetic development of the individual when both the material and spiritual life of society and the individual are fully integrated.

The aesthetic culture of the individual is only one of the important factors in the all-round balanced development of the individual and his spiritual resources. It is not something self-contained and independent of other aspects, such as moral, social and psychological features.

Technological progress and aesthetic improvement in working and living conditions, etc., will not achieve the required aim of the all-round development of the individual if they affect externals only, ignoring his spiritual and moral requirements. In such a case they cease to be a means of spiritual enrichment and become an end in themselves leading to spiritual impoverishment by substituting the externals of modern civilisation for the genuine aesthetic culture of the individual. A high level of personal aesthetic culture is possible only if a person does not become the slave of the things and conditions which he himself has created. This worship of things was bitterly satirised by Mayakovsky. It has also provided material for modern writers and artists, who have shown how an excessive preoccupation with the latest household gadgets and so on, has a harmful effect on the people who created them,

depriving them of many warm, human qualities and impoverishing them spiritually. Therefore in any discussion of man's aesthetic relationship to the world it is impossible to examine that which surrounds man, his physical and social environment, as something distinct from the spiritual side of things, the various forms of consciousness developed by mankind and, above all, the arts as a part of the spiritual and material life of the community.

The arts, which represent the main sphere of human aesthetic activity, have a special role to play in the aesthetic formation of the individual.

The unique influence of the arts on the individual lies in the fact that they shape and educate the individual as a whole, developing his taste, aesthetic and moral sense, and social ideals. This concerted spiritual influence on man which takes place during the process of aesthetic perception and emotional involvement gives the individual great pleasure. By reflecting the essence of human character and action, the deep processes of life which are frequently concealed by reality, and by creating generalised social types and typical characters, great art, which is a broad sphere of cognition and self-knowledge for the individual, extends and deepens man's social and aesthetic experience, developing aesthetic sense and taste. It makes it possible for him to feel and understand things which were formerly unfamiliar to him. Art acquaints people with the talented products of those who are capable of a uniquely profound awareness, understanding and assessment of all that is great and beautiful in life and are able to pass this ability on to the rest of mankind through their works. The person who has not experienced the deep pleasure of contact with the aesthetic world of Shakespeare and Pushkin,

Raphael and Rembrandt, Balzac and Dreiser, to mention but a few great names, and has not made their works his own property, is all the poorer for it in many respects. By developing people's capacity for serious, deep thought, profound feeling and enjoyment of all that is great and beautiful, works of true aesthetic value also help to change man's views on society and the interrelation between man and society.

The way in which the individual views social problems is always influenced both by social conditions and by individual strength of character. The ways in which society influences the aesthetic culture of the individual are many and varied.

* * *

In order to define the concept of "the aesthetic culture of the individual" one must first examine the basic factors which determine human aesthetic culture in general. The most important of these is society, i.e., human social relations in all their rich variety of aspects. The aesthetic culture of the individual should not be reduced to mere externals of behaviour and manners. It is closely connected with the individual's spiritual, social, ideological and moral make-up. Lev Tolstoi provided an excellent illustration of the fundamental disparity between the apparent culture of an aristocrat —*comme il faut*—based on the observance of social etiquette, and his true spiritual self. In his short story "After the Ball" the great writer gives a fine portrayal of the horror of his young hero who is enchanted by the charm, perfect manners and ability to dance beautifully and shine in society of the apparently good-natured colonel Pyotr Vladislavovich, when he sees the latter in a different context: making soldiers run the gauntlet

with incredible cruelty. The colonel is striking the faces of his soldiers, particularly the weak ones, with his strong hand in its suede glove, all because they had not raised their sticks with sufficient ferocity to beat the bloody back of the man receiving punishment. The aesthetic picture of the colonel at the ball is replaced by a sense of the profoundly anti-aesthetic. "... I experienced a feeling of almost physical repulsion that made me want to vomit. . . . And I felt that at any minute I would spew out the horror with which this sight had filled me."

For an aesthetically developed person the social environment, the conditions in which he lives and the social and spiritual spheres of contact, are not reduced to his home, work and family, etc., although these do in fact constitute an important part of his social environment. A person with a fully developed aesthetic sense, however, cannot be restricted by the confines of this narrow world. He is attracted by social environment in its broader sense including all the social conditions of human life: nature, society, personal relations, everyday life, work, the whole human planet. Developing a person's aesthetic sense in relation to society means cultivating his spiritual concern for the world as a whole and the fate of mankind in general, as if they were his direct concern.

The profound humanity of Saint-Exupery's story *Le petit prince* lies in the fact that the little prince is on such good terms with his planet. His daily concern with keeping it beautiful, peaceful and free from weeds is the ideal expression of this broad outlook on life. It is free from all petty concern for personal well-being, and without it human happiness and beauty are impossible. The concept of "the aesthetic culture of the indi-

vidual" must not, therefore, be restricted to the externals of human life, such as possessions and behaviour, etc., although these are extremely important for the aesthetic culture of man and society as a whole. The true aesthetic culture of the individual is to be found only in the dialectical unity of external beauty with beauty of soul, humanism, noble thoughts and actions.

The words of the great Russian writer, Anton Chekhov, that "Everything about a person must be beautiful: his face, his clothes, his soul and his thoughts" are not only still valid in this day and age, but have actually become the practical aim in the process of developing the individual.

Soviet art and literature continuing the best traditions of Russian and world classics and revealing deep layers in human life, have done more than simply creating new social and psychological types. The heroes of Soviet art and literature have also brought the world a picture of the new aesthetic culture, that beauty of the individual which is an integral part of its spiritual and moral beauty and strength. The heroes found in the works of Sholokhov, Fedin, Tvardovsky, Paustovsky, Simonov and other Soviet writers are truly great in their humanism, nobility and high spiritual demands.

Man reveals his aesthetic sense and potential first and foremost in his activity, his influence on society and the creation of new aesthetic values and new works of art revealing the meaning and content of our age and showing contemporary social, moral and psychological types and the essence and beauty of the modern world.

However the assimilation of the aesthetic values of the past which constitute an integral part of the spiritual riches of mankind is also an extremely important factor for the aesthetic develop-

ment of society and the individual. Modern means of communication and the increase in world travel have made the aesthetic culture of former civilisations accessible to the whole of mankind. This places on every country a special responsibility in respect of the preservation of its aesthetic treasures.

The question of the aesthetic heritage of the past is one which demands individual careful examination. I should like to touch on one aspect only: its importance for the aesthetic development of the individual. Man's aesthetic relation with reality advances not only through the discovery of new aesthetic qualities and the creation of new aesthetic values. The dialectic of aesthetic progress presupposes an active assimilation and extension of the aesthetic experience of former ages.

The greatest works of art have always been a source of instruction in life, morals, goodness and beauty. The question of how one approaches the aesthetic heritage of the past belongs to those "eternal" problems which in each new age retain their vitality and acquire new aspects and possibilities.

Belinsky once wrote that "Pushkin is one of those immortal, constantly changing phenomena that do not stop at the point of death, but continue to develop in the mind of society. Each age pronounces its own judgment on them and, however well it has understood them, always leaves the following age with something new and more penetrating to say, and no age will ever express all that can be said. . . ."

The aesthetic heritage of the past in its various forms is constantly being absorbed more and

* V. G. Belinsky, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. 2, Moscow, 1948, p. 158.

more deeply into the life of the Soviet people and becoming the personal possession of each citizen.

One observes a definite tendency to broaden the sphere of this aesthetic heritage by the discovery of new aesthetic values in the past and by overcoming historical limitations in aesthetic taste.

We value highly old Russian art, such as the work of Andrei Rublyov and the architecture of the ancient town of Suzdal, as well as the works of Shakespeare and the novels of the Indian writer, Rabindranath Tagore, medieval Gothic and modern architecture, the painting of the Japanese artist Hokusai and of the Impressionists.

The desire to assimilate as much of this heritage as possible does not imply lack of discrimination, but rather the active employment of the spiritual riches created by mankind to ensure the all-round development of the individual in present-day Soviet society and the raising of his aesthetic culture.

The Soviet people have inherited all the best aesthetic works of the past, because they are presented with a careful selection of all that which is of true value. Each age contributes some new aspect to aesthetic progress. The course of history reveals the great variety of these discoveries and the gradual progression towards truth as a whole. The Soviet people do not advocate aesthetic utopianism and do not echo the words of the great Dostoyevsky, who had lost faith in other means of making a better life, that "the world will be saved by beauty". This sort of overestimation of the role of the aesthetic factor only serves to distract mankind from the objective truth, and gives rise to false notions about the development of society and the individual.

But aesthetic education and culture of the individual in the broad sense, and of society and

mankind as a whole, play an active part in helping to change and improve both the social environment and the individual himself, and in bringing people together in the interests of peace and progress.

The aesthetic education of the individual in the Soviet Union is the concern of the whole people and the state. The Soviet people have made great progress in the assimilation of aesthetic culture and the development of aesthetic taste, requirements and potential. Much still remains to be done, however. Serious efforts must be made to ensure that the aesthetic factor plays an even greater role in everyday life and to develop a high degree of aesthetic appreciation in each member of society. The science of aesthetics, the arts and technological advances all have their part to play in this great task, as well as the use of other countries' valuable research and experience in this sphere. The exchange of views and information on this question is, without doubt, extremely fruitful.

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